

W. Somerville.

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HARRY WORCESTER SMITH



Notes of the Horn

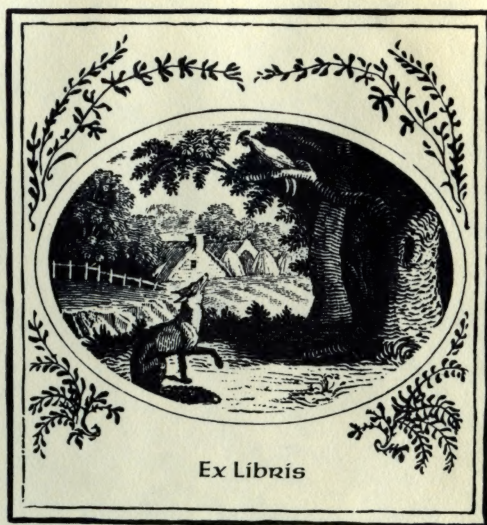


Hunting Verse, Old and New

Collected by

W. Somerville.

50



John and Martha Daniels

NOTES OF THE HORN

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E. Æ. SOMERVILLE

(late M.F.H. WEST CARBERY FOXHOUNDS)

Joint Author with MARTIN ROSS
of

*Some Experiences of an Irish R.M. ;
Dan Russel the Fox, etc. etc.*

WITH 12 ILLUSTRATIONS

If search were made through the length and breadth of England and Ireland, no compiler of an Anthology of Hunting Verse could be discovered more appropriate than the distinguished lady who has made an immortal character of *An Irish R.M.* Dr. Somerville has chosen an infinitely varied and attractive collection of Hunting Poems, and has included not only the old favourites, but also several modern poets, and some traditional verse comparatively unknown. Shakespeare and Sir Walter Scott, Gray and William Cornish, Whyte-Melville, Masfield, Siegfried Sassoon, and Will Ogilvie are among those who find a place in this charming Christmas book, which is illustrated with twelve reproductions from Ben Marshall, Stubbs, Ferneley, Wootton, Herring, Barraud, Davis, Sartorius, and Alken.



JOHN POWLETT AND HIS HOUNDS
From the painting by Ben Marshall (1767-1835)

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"DAN RUSSEL THE FOX"
ETC. ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

BEN MARSHALL, STUBBS, SARTORIUS,
ALKEN, ETC.

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1934

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

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PREFATORY

IN a small shop in the City of Cork, dedicated to the sale of ancient books, I had, not long ago, the luck to happen upon a Collection of Poetry, in three large volumes. It was entitled, without undue modesty, *The Universal Songster; or, Museum of Mirth.*

It seems to me to justify the first part, at least, of its title. Each volume contains, on a moderate estimate, some two thousand poems, and is provided with a classified index that considerably directs the reader to the subject that interests him, whether "*Comic, Amatory, Religious, Bacchanalian, or Sporting.*"

These certainly offer a wide and attractive choice, but I turned unhesitatingly to "*Sporting.*" The subject, apparently, appealed no less to the Compiler than to me, and I found that he exhibited a remarkable preference, over all other sports, for Hunting. Among many hundreds of poems treating of stag, fox, or hare hunting, I found but one tepid number that referred to Angling. The Gun was ignored.

The Collection is dated 1820, but it is during the preceding century that Hunting was hymned with special enthusiasm by the Songsters, whose summons to "*Brother Sportsmen*" and "*Brave Boys*" occupy a great deal of space and are rather lacking in variety. I have found selection a difficult if enjoyable task. The verses throb with passionate invocations of Phœbus, Bacchus, Diana—whose name is occasionally intensified by the addition of a second n—and Venus. Venus, indeed, is regarded as a demoralising influence, and is generally associated with the Sportsman's wife, a lady whose attractions being reinforced by those of the Four-poster and the Feather-bed, is, not without reason, regarded as a Spoil Sport. Even more to be condemned than the wife is the poor-spirited husband, who, so far from "*scorning his downy bed,*" hesitates to leave it "*before the sun rises,*" knowing that he has to face a fresh horse in the dark of a frosty morning.

We hear little of these rigours in the songs of a softer century.

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Feather-beds are no longer regarded as a temptation, and the wife, as likely as not, insists on "joining the glad throng," and requiring the best horse in the stable into the bargain. It is from about the 'fifties of the last century, onward, that the modern spirit begins to assert itself, and it is noteworthy that the position of the fox is advanced no less than that of the wife. No longer is he regarded as the Traitor and Murderer who "invades the sacred retirements of Innocence"—a phrase that would not, as a rule, suggest the Hen-house—and the Villain who dishonourably "besmears himself in a stench superior to his own" in order to deceive his pursuers.

It is Whyte-Melville who begins the cult of the dashing "Lord of the Valley," who, "with courage untiring," holds his own against tremendous odds. His death is regarded as a cause of triumph. It is not pretended to be an act of justice.

Surtees, coming between Whyte-Melville and the ancients, did not attempt verse, and developed a form of exuberant—not to say laboured—humour that was new to the serious subject of Foxhunting.

But why should I trail an Irish coat-tail for all England to stand on it? Speaking only for myself, I find the grave and classic instructions of Beckford and Delmé Radcliffe, and the well-groomed, bang-tailed—if such adjectives may be permitted—narrations of "Nimrod," more in keeping with a Sport whose ordered pageant burns with so restrained and profound an enthusiasm. As one of my countrymen said, reproving a frivolous reference to potatoes: "There's some things is too serious for joking."

Whyte-Melville's verse has in it the generous gentlemanlike spirit of a good horse, a horse who is not one of the brilliant, temperamental uncertainties, who may refuse one day and will—as I have heard it described—"lep the heighth of a tree" the next, but a sensible, courageous hunter, who won't turn his head save for a good reason. There is in Whyte-Melville's "Hunting Songs" none of the wayward beauty and humour that one finds in the verse of Mr. P. R. Chalmers or Mr. W. H. Ogilvie, yet in his galloping, straightforward ballads there is a quality that has power to convey the authentic thrill of that moment, when, waiting outside the covert—and I am thinking of a low gorse covert on an Irish hillside—one hears the first faint questioning note, and the red-tipped sterns, that are all that one can see of

PREFATORY

the hounds, converge and throng to the place where that voice spoke, and the question is answered by a clash of mellow music, as

*"Fleet as a swallow, when Summer winds follow,
The Lord of the Valley skims over the grass."*

Only in the verse of the present generation does Dan Russel the Fox receive the respect and remorseful consideration to which he is certainly entitled. When Mr. Chalmers ends an almost too vivid description of the finish of a run and of a fox, by saying

"He faces about with a snarl to be eaten,"

sympathy cannot but shift from the striving hounds to the beaten warrior. The older poets who concentrate on the iniquity of the Invader of the Retirements of Innocence, make more comfortable reading.

In addition to the following list of acknowledgments to Poets and their Publishers, I should like to give gratitude to the kind friends who have helped me in this pleasant task of singing old songs, and waking old memories, and have given me useful suggestions, and more than one epic of great runs of long ago.

And specially to these: Mrs. Patchett; Mrs. Townshend; Miss Eleanor Hodson, B.A.; Miss Kathleen Conyngham Greene; Mr. Frederick Watson, M.F.H.; and my brother, Colonel John Somerville, C.M.G., C.B.E.

To all of these Gratitude,

From one of the Craft,

E. E. SOMERVILLE.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I WISH to thank the following for their kind permission to include in this collection of Hunting Verse, past and present, the copyright poems that I have selected as representative of Hunting poetry of to-day:—

Messrs. W. Heinemann Ltd., for "The Old Squire" and "St. Valentine's Day," by Wilfred Scawen Blunt; Mr. Patrick R. Chalmers and Messrs. Methuen & Co. for "The Fox"; Mr. Chalmers and Messrs. Eyre & Spottiswoode for "The Huntsman's Story" and "The Find"; Mrs. John Davidson and Mr. Grant Richards for "A Runnable Stag" (from *Holiday and Other Poems*), by John Davidson; Colonel Clifton Lisle (Hon. Sec. The Radnor Foxhounds, U.S.A.) and the Editors of *Polo* (Boston), *The Saturday Evening Post*, and *The Rider and Driver* (New York) respectively, for "Cubbing," "Hunting Hill," and "Rain"; Mr. John Masefield and Messrs. Heinemann for the extract from "Reynard the Fox" (from *The Collected Poems of John Masefield*); Mr. Will Ogilvie and Messrs. Constable for "A Fox Away," "The Lost Hound," and "Hounds going Home in the Dark"; Mr. Ogilvie and the Proprietors of *Punch*, for "John Peel: A Centenary Tribute"; Mr. R. J. Richardson and the Proprietors of *Punch* for "The Missed Meet"; Mr. Siegfried Sassoon and Messrs. Heinemann for "Together"; and Dr. W. B. Yeats and Messrs. Macmillan & Co. for "The Ballad of the Foxhunter."

E. Æ. S.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We are grateful to The Macmillan Company for permission to include in this anthology an extract from "Reynard the Fox" by John Masefield and "The Ballad of the Foxhunter" by W. B. Yeats.

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS.

John Peel

D'ye ken John Peel, with his coat so gray,
D'ye ken John Peel at the break o' the day,
D'ye ken John Peel when he's far, far away,
 With his hounds and his horn in the morning?
For the sound of his horn brought me from my bed,
And the cry of his hounds me has ofttimes led,
Peel's View-Halloo would awaken the dead,
 Or the fox from his lair in the morning.

Yes, I ken John Peel and Ruby too,
Ranter and Ringwood, Bellman and True,
From a find to a check, from a check to a view,
 From a view to a death in the morning.
For the sound of his horn brought me from my bed,
And the cry of his hounds me has ofttimes led,
Peel's View-Halloo would awaken the dead,
 Or the fox from his lair in the morning.

Then here's to John Peel from my heart and soul,
Let's drink to his health, let's finish the bowl,
We'll follow John Peel thro' fair and thro' foul
 If we want a good hunt in the morning.
For the sound of his horn brought me from my bed,
And the cry of his hounds me has ofttimes led,
Peel's View-Halloo would awaken the dead,
 Or the fox from his lair in the morning.

D'ye ken John Peel with his coat so gray,
He lived at Troutbeck once on a day,
Now he has gone, far, far away,
 We shall ne'er hear his voice in the morning.
For the sound of his horn brought me from my bed,
And the cry of his hounds me has ofttimes led,
Peel's View-Halloo would awaken the dead,
 Or the fox from his lair in the morning.

John Woodcock Graves.

John Peel

(A CENTENARY TRIBUTE)

Those who have bartered their load of care
For a glorious draught of the open air
Have never regretted the deal.
And as long as a hunting lilt is sung,
As long as a bright-eyed partner's swung,
As long as a feathering hound gives tongue
And a spur is hung on the heel,
So long shall a company old and young
Keep living your fame, John Peel!

Will H. Ogilvie.

A Fox Away

There are many splendid moments 'twixt the cradle and the
grave

When a man may reach to rapture, but the one that I would
crave

Is the moment when a whimper in a crash of music merges
And four hundred hoofs are beating like the thunder of the
surges

And the pack comes out of covert like the curving of a wave.

(When we see a lean fox loping like a shadow o'er the lea,)
When our good horse reefs and reaches in his fretting to be free,
When the crowd are in a cluster at the narrow bridle gateway
And the few prefer the oak-rails as the sternest but the straight
way

And a place among the leaders is the only place to be.

There are many thrilling moments in this life of plot and play
That can set the pulses racing, but no moment, I would say,
Like the one when Misty Morning with his reaching stride grown
shorter,

With a lift of sloping shoulder and a heave of muscled quarter
Lands you out among the leaders with a travelling fox away!

Will H. Ogilvie.

Jolly Hunters

The hounds are all out
And the morning does peep
How can you, you sluggardly sot
How can you, how can you
Lie snoring in bed,
While we on horseback have got, my brave boys,
Whilst we on horseback have got.

I cannot get up
For my over-night's cup,
So terrible it lies in my head
Besides my wife cries
"My dear do not rise,
But cuddle me longer in bed, my brave boys,
But cuddle me longer in bed."

Come on with your boots
And saddle your mare
Don't make any further delay,
The cry of the hounds
And the sight of the hare
Will chase all your vapours away, my brave boys,
Will chase all your vapours away.

Hark how the huntsman
Has started poor puss
He has her now still in his view,
We'll never forsake her
Till we overtake her,
So merrily let us pursue, my brave boys,
So merrily let us pursue.

No pleasure like hunting
To pass the long day,
We scour the hill and the dale,
At night for our supper
We feast on our prey,
When over a cup of good ale, my brave boys,
When over a cup of good ale.

Newcastle, 1770.

John O'Dwyer of the Glen

When I rose in the morning
And the summer sun was shining,
I heard the huntsman's horn
And the sweet song of birds.
I heard badgers and hares,
The long-billed woodcocks,
The sound of the echo
And the shots of loud guns.

A red fox on the rock
The Horsemen shouting,
And a woman in the farm
Sadly counting the geese.
But now the wood is being cut down,
Let us go across the seas.
Oh, John O'Dwyer of the Glen,
You have lost your Lordship!

Irish Traditional.

The Health-Giving Chase

Hark! Hark! 'tis the sound of the mellow-toned horn
That thrills so delightfully sweet in my ear;
Night's fairly run down by the sure-footed morn,
And the bright beams of Phœbus begin to appear!
Then arise! brother sportsmen! see Sol's jolly face,
And his summons obey to the health-giving chase.

The high-mettled steeds hear, with pleasure, the sound,
Paw the plain with impatience, and snuff the rich gale;
While their neighing's returned by each op'ning hound,
All eager to fly up the hill, down the dale.

The dewdrops that lurk on each blade, leaf, or spray,
Now the morn's piercing eye ev'ry covert explores;
Are chased by the sun's fiery ardour away,
While their fragrance full streams of salubrity pours.

The fox who, all night, amidst darkness profound,
On the sacred retirements of Innocence stole;
Now dreads retribution in ev'ry sound,
And shrinks to the innermost depths of his hole.

Let us, with calm bosoms, unconscious of wrong,
All vile miscreants hunt down, who on Innocence prey;
Nor lose sight of Virtue, in sports or in song,
That our hearts may rejoice at the close of the day.
Then arise, brother sportsmen! see Sol's jolly face,
And his summons obey to the health-giving chase.

Traditional.

A Hunting Song

DRINK, PUPPY, DRINK

Here's to the fox in his earth below the rocks!
And here's to the line that we follow,
And here's to the hound with his nose upon the ground,
Tho' merrily we whoop and we holloa.

Chorus—

Then drink, puppy, drink,
And let ev'ry puppy drink
That is old enough to lap and to swallow,
For he'll grow into a hound,
So we'll pass the bottle round,
And merrily we'll whoop and we'll holloa.

Here's to the horse, and the rider too, of course;
And here's to the rally o' the hunt, boys;
Here's a health to ev'ry friend who can struggle to the end,
And here's to the "Tally-Ho" in front, boys.

Chorus—

Then drink, puppy, drink,
And let ev'ry puppy drink
That is old enough to lap and to swallow,
For he'll grow into a hound,
So we'll pass the bottle round,
And merrily we'll whoop and we'll holloa.

Here's to the gap, and the timber that we rap,
Here's to the white thorn, and the black too;
And here's to the pace that puts life into the chase,
And the fence that gives a moment to the pack, too.

Chorus—

Then drink, puppy, drink,
And let ev'ry puppy drink
That is old enough to lap and to swallow;
For he'll grow into a hound,
So we'll pass the bottle round,
And merrily we'll whoop and we'll holloa.

Oh, the pack is staunch and true, now they run from scent to
view,
And it's worth the risk of life and limb and neck, boys;
To see them drive and stoop till they finish with "Who Whoop!"
Forty minutes on the grass without a check, boys.

Chorus—

Then drink, puppy, drink,
And let ev'ry puppy drink
That is old enough to lap and to swallow,
For he'll grow into a hound,
So we'll pass the bottle round,
And merrily we'll whoop and we'll holloa.

G. J. Whyte-Melville.



THE OLD SURREY FOXHOUNDS AT ADDINGTON PALACE:
SIR EDWARD ANTROBUS, BT., MASTER

From the painting by W. Barraud (1810-1850)



Cubbing: New Entry

Dawn mist on the alders and corn still high,
Coop to him! Puppy! There'll be fun by and by!
When you've learned to leave kennels as your betters had to do,
With the moon for a candle and the dew for a try,
And just a hint of something in the horn's leup-leu,
To draw you through the yarrow and the tall meadow-rue.
Coop to him! Puppy! Leave it! I say!
Coop, there, Coop! It's almost day!

You'll soon hear the fiddles and dance to the fun,
Eleu, there! Puppy! The jig's begun!
Though the staghorn's thick and the greenbriers bite,
You'll find that it pays like a chore well done,
To hold to your fox and to shun the sight
Of a cottontail's scut bobbing up in fright.
Eleu, there! Puppy! 'Ware hare! Try!
Eleu-eu! Yeap-ep! Hark to cry!

Melody has it! She's making things hum!
Forrard! Puppy! Awa-ay! By gum!
Two cubs in the mullein at the covert side
Are shirking the open. Their day will come.
But who cares a fig for a game of bide,
When a Straight-necked points to save his hide?
Forrard! Puppy! Hark! Hark! Hark!
Forrard! Who-hark! Harkee! Hark!

Legs getting weary? Wind coming thick?
Tally-ho! Puppy! He's doubled at the crick!
Show 'em now what blood can do,
Forget you're beaten! Lead there! Nick!
Try through the ox-eyes! True as true
That earth's open! Go it! You!
Tally-ho! Puppy! Beat him! Swoop!
Tally-ho! Roll him! Whoa-ah-whoop!

Dodged you? Ducked you? Went to ground?
Cheer up! Puppy! You'll have another round.
Frost will help and a touch of wet;
It takes some weather to enter a hound;
You're sure to dish that rascal yet,
So don't you bother and don't you fret.
(You marked him under! He's in there yet!)
Cheer up! Puppy! Come awa-ay! Come!
Cheer up! Pack there! Home! Home! Home!

Clifton Lisle.

How they drive to the Front!

How they drive to the front!
How they bustle and spread!
Those badger-pied beauties that open the ball!
Ere we've gone for a mile
They are furlongs ahead
In they pour like a torrent o'er upland and wall!
There is raking of rowel and shaking of rein,
Few hunters can live at the Badminton pace,
And the pride of the Stable extended in vain,
And the Blues and the Buffs are all over the place!

G. J. Whyte-Melville.

A New Hunting Song

MADE ON A FOX CHASE

Come all you Foxhunters where ever you be,
Repair to the Leven if Sportsmen you'd see,
Such hounds and such horses of mettle and game,
As worthy to be recorded in Fame.

Sing Ballinamona-oro,
Ballinamona-oro,
Ballinamona-oro, the lads of old Cleveland for me.

Dexter and Delver and Dido for speed,
All sprung from the Race of Charles Turner's fam'd breed,
A sportsman so rare, and the first in renown,
As witness the match over Felldom he won.

Rover and Rally and Minor likewise,
Old Spanker, so fierce the thick Cover he tries,
Matcham and Merrylass, Reynard's sworn foe;
He must be unkennell'd, hark! I hear Tally-O!

Now, me lads, for your Horses and smoke 'em away,
Jolly Bacchus and Sampson will shew you some play,
Squire Hill on his Wakefield that pampered Nag,
Comes neck over heels yet of him will brag.

George Baker on Blacklegs how determined he looks,
He defies the whole field over hedge, ditch, or brooks,
He keeps him quite tight and he only desires
A three hours' chase, I'll be damn'd if he tires.

See thumping along goes jolly old Walker,
While close at his heels lay the Gisborough Prior,
With powder and sweat, Lord! how awful he looks,
Damn you, Matt, did you mind how I leap'd yonder brook?

The first in the burst was Scroop on old Match'em,
Straining hard to get in Tom swore he would catch 'em,
Whilst screwing along see Smith only mind him,
He's top'd the bar'd Gate, leaving numbers behind him.

Yonder goes Stockdale so tight and so trim,
How he strokes down his mare which he fancies so slim.
He nicks in and out till he's starv'd with the cold,
Go, bid him but thirty and then he'll ride bold.

Preston so brave, with his heart full of glee,
On his Gaylass well mounted as he'd wish to be,
He swears that he'll ride 'till he dies in the field,
As a true honest sportsman he never will yield.

Coates on his Tyrant he creeps like a snail,
He puffs and he blows, and how he rolls his tail;
Yet a sportsman so bold he attempts at a flyer,
Old Tyrant leaps short and he's down in the mire.

The Baronet cautious is pass'd by his Brother,
As like you would swear as one Egg's like another,
When fully intending to leave the whole field
A damn'd Stell held 'em both 'till the fox he was killed.

The Doctor, you scarcely know where you have him,
For sometimes he's dodging and sometimes he's dashing,
But yet to the Chace will he eagerly rush,
And lose a good patient for bold Reynard's brush.

Flounders, the younger, with eyelids of glass,
So prim on his Stallion and fond of his flash,
One single good run finish'd off the gay Quaker,
And now he's gone dumb with intent to turn speaker.

Now our sport being over let's home without fail,
And drown those misfortunes in Punch and good ale,
And if we're thrown out, we'll draw close to the fire,
And drink a good health to the Baronet and Squire.

London, 1720.

The Lord of the Valley

Hunters are fretting, and hacks in a lather,
Sportsmen arriving from left and from right;
Bridle-roads bringing them, see how they gather,
Dotting the meadows in scarlet and white.
Foot-people staring and horsemen preparing,
Now there's a murmur, a stir, and a shout;
Fresh from his carriage, as bridegroom in marriage,
The Lord of the Valley leaps gallantly out.

Time, the avenger, neglecting or scorning,
Gazes about him in beauteous disdain;
Lingers to toy with the whisper of morning,
Daintily, airily, paces the plain.
Then in a second, his course having reckoned,
Line that all Leicestershire cannot surpass,
Fleet as the swallow, when summer-winds follow,
The Lord of the Valley skims over the grass.

Where shall we take him? Ah! now for the tussle;
These are the beauties, can stoop, and can fly,
Down go their noses, together they bustle,
Dashing and flinging, and scorning to cry.
Never stand dreaming, while yonder they're streaming,
If ever you meant it, man, mean it to-day!
Bold ones are riding and fast ones are striding;
The Lord of the Valley is forward, away!

Hard on his track o'er the open, and facing
The cream of the country, the pick of the chase,
Mute as a dream, his pursuers are racing;
Silence, you know's the criterion of pace.
Swarming and driving, while man and horse striving,
By hugging and cramming scarce live with them still,
The fastest are failing, the truest are tailing,
The Lord of the Valley is over the hill!

Yonder a steed is rolled up with his master,
Here, in a double, another lies cast;
Faster and faster come grief and disaster,
All but the good ones are weeded at last.
Hunters so limber at water and timber,
Now on the causeway are fain to be led;
Beat, but still going, a countryman sowing,
Has sighted the Lord of the Valley ahead!

There in the bottom, see, sluggish and idle,
Steals the dark stream where the willow-tree grows;
Harden your heart and catch hold of the bridle,
Steady him! Rouse him! And over he goes.
Look, in a minute a dozen are in it,
But forward! Hark forward! for draggled and blown,
A check though desiring, with courage untiring,
The Lord of the Valley is holding his own.

Onward we struggle in sorrow and labour,
Lurching and lopping, and "bellows to mend";
Each, while he smiles at the plight of his neighbour,
Only is anxious to get to the end.
Horses are flagging, hounds drooping and lagging,
But gathering down yonder, where press as they may,
Mobbed, driven, and haunted, but game and undaunted,
The Lord of the Valley stands proudly at bay.

Now here's to the Baron, and all his supporters,
The thrusters, the skitters, the whole of the tale;
And here's to the fairest of all hunting quarters,
The widest of pastures, three cheers for the Vale!
For the fair lady rider, the rogue who beside her
Finds breath in a gallop his suit to advance,
The hounds for our pleasure, that time us the measure,
The Lord of the Valley that leads us the dance!

G. J. Whyte-Melville.

A Fox, A Fox, Up Gallants

A Fox, a fox, up gallants, to the fields!
List to the merry cry that sweetness yields!
Jove's high-bred boy rides mounted on a tun;
Selenia makes his lazy ass to run
 In pursuit of the Chace,
 With which may none compare,
 Neither for four miles' race.
 Nor hunting of the hare.
Join Music to the cry, that hollow rocks
May echo forth the hunting of the fox.

The Fox hath lost the field and left the town,
And up your barley hill scours up and down;
With fear enforced, weak Reynard seems to daunt
The courage of the warlike Elephant.
 But hark! The horns do blow,
 And all the Huntsmen shout.
 There goes the game, I know,
 But Tickler drives him out!
Join Music to the cry, that hollow rocks
May echo forth the hunting of the fox.

Ride! Ride! St. George! He's stole into the bush!
Old Swag-pot makes him straight from thence to rush!
Then creeps into the vine, and there doth earth.
O heavenly cry, exceeding earthly mirth!
 Hark! Youland and Pottle,
 Old Gusquin and Rainsbolt,
 But hark how Pim doth tattle
 Now he's got to the hole!
Join Music to the cry, that hollow rocks
May echo forth the hunting of the fox.



MASTER OF THE HOUNDS
From the painting by J. Ferneley (1781-1860)

The Fox, quite spent, about the town he reels,
And now in view he's followed at the heels,
Then climbs a tree—that climbing was his fall,
And to that fall came in the Huntsmen all.
Then Sug, and Soot, Swillback,
Cavil, and speckled Dyer,
Toss, Swagger, and Spendall
Tug him through dirt and mire!
Now join our horn and voices all, that hollow rocks
May echo forth the hunting of the fox.

Anon., 1661.

From "The Chace," Book I

The Chace I sing, Hounds, and their various Breed,
And no less various Use . . .
While crowded Theatres, too fondly proud
Of their exotick Minstrels, and shrill Pipes,
The Price of Manhood, hail thee with a Song,
And Airs soft-warbling; my hoarse-sounding Horn
Invites thee to the Chace, the Sport of Kings;
Image of War, without its Guilt. . . .

Ye vig'rous Youths, by smiling Fortune blest
With large Demesnes, hereditary Wealth,
Heap'd copious by your wise Fore-Fathers' Care,
Hear and attend! while I the Means reveal
T'enjoy those Pleasures, for the Weak too strong,
Too costly for the Poor: to rein the Steed
Swift-stretching o'er the Plain, to chear the Pack
Op'ning in Consorts of harmonious Joy,
But breathing Death. What tho' the Gripe severe
Of brazen-fisted Time, and slow Disease
Creeping thro' ev'ry Vein, and Nerve unstrung,
Afflict my shatter'd Frame, undaunted still,
Fix'd as a Mountain Ash, that braves the Bolts
Of angry Jove; tho' blasted, yet unfall'n;
Still can my Soul in Fancy's Mirrouer view
Deeds glorious once, recal the joyous Scene
In all its Splendors deck'd, o'er the full Bowl
Recount my triumphs past, urge others on
With Hand and Voice, and point the winding Way.

William Somerville.

The Find

I heard the South wind sob;
I smelt dead leaf and rain,
I saw two velvet caps a-bob
And scarlet in the lane.
And then, mine eyes confronting
And fit as fighting cocks,
I saw the hounds go hunting—
The hounds go out a-hunting,
A-hunting, a-hunting,
A-hunting of the fox.

Said I, "Twould be a sin
To fail to see them draw
And find the fox of Foxglove Whin
The biggest e'er man saw."
So where the thorn did house him
The huntsman's cheer was wine;
"Go, rouse him, lads, go rouse him,
Oh, rouse him, rouse him, rouse him
Oh, wind him and rouse him,
Oh, wind him, sons o' mine!"

The pied pack sprang and spread:
Far was the sweet cry borne,
Unkennelled was the thief in red,
Unkennelled to the morn;
Quoth I, "The rogue, they'll tan him,
Such fox-catchers are they!"
Then tunelessly they ran him,
So tunelessly they ran him,
They ran him, and ran him,
They ran him far away.

The finish of the fun
I saw it not to say,
Mayhap the robber lives to run
Upon another day:
Or, haply, for the last time
He's widowed turkey-cocks:
I only say, "Where's pastime,
Where's sport or aught or pastime
Where's joy, ploy, or pastime
Like hunting of the fox?"

Patrick R. Chalmers.

The Galloping Squire

Come, I'll show you a country that none can surpass,
For a flyer to cross like a bird on the wing.
We have acres of woodland and oceans of grass,
We have game in the autumn and cubs in the spring.
We have scores of good fellows hang out in the shire,
But the best of them all is the Galloping Squire.

The Galloping Squire to the saddle has got,
While the dewdrop is melting in gems on the thorn,
From the kennel he's drafted the pick of his lot,
How they swarm to his cheer! How they fly to his horn!
Like harriers turning or chasing like fire,
"I can trust 'em, each hound!" says the Galloping Squire.

One wave of his arm, to the covert they throng;
"Yoi! Wind him! And rouse him! By Jove, he's away!"
Through a gap in the oaks see them speeding along
O'er the open like pigeons: "They *mean* it to-day!
You may jump till you're sick—you may spur till you tire!
For it's catch 'em who can!" says the Galloping Squire.

Then he takes the old horse by the head, and he sails
In the wake of his darlings, all ear and all eye,
As they come in his line, o'er banks, fences, and rails,
The cramped ones to creep, and the fair ones to fly.
It's a *very* queer place that will put in the mire
Such a rare one to ride as the Galloping Squire.

But a fallow has brought to their noses the pack,
And the pasture beyond is with cattle stains spread:
One wave of his arm, and the Squire in a crack
Has lifted and thrown in the beauties at head.
"On a morning like this it's small help you require,
But he's forward, I'll swear!" says the Galloping Squire.

So forty fair minutes they run and they race,
'Tis a heaven to some! 'tis a life-time to all;
Tho' the horses we ride are such gluttons for pace,
There are stout ones that stop, there are safe ones that fall,
But the names of the vanquish'd need never transpire,
For they're all in the rear of the Galloping Squire.

Till the gamest old varmint that ever drew breath,
All stiffen'd and draggled, held high for a throw,
O'er the Squire's jolly visage, is grinning in death,
Ere he dashes him down to be eaten below;
While the daws flutter out from a neighbouring spire
At the thrilling who-whoop of the Galloping Squire.

And the labourer at work, and the lord in his hall,
Have a jest or a smile when they hear of the sport,
In ale or in claret he's toasted by all,
For they never expect to see more of the sort.
And long may it be ere he's forced to retire,
For we breed very few like the Galloping Squire!

G. J. Whyte-Melville.

The Missed Meet

(A BALLAD OF THE CHASE)

Tho' hoarfrost lingered in the shade,
And rime lay white in copse and glade,
Upon the winter landscape played
A sun as mild as May.
With trampling hoof and stirrup clink
The lanes beneath them rang;
Whole hamlets ran to watch them prink
In brown and yellow, black and pink;
Blithely they laughed and sang:
So for the Meet rode Harbottle, Sillitoe, Griggs, and Briggs,
and Buller-Brown,
And Grumby on the grey.

To meet the Hounds at Harepark Gate;
The road was long, the time grew late,
And still they rode, serene, inflate,
The unfamiliar way.
The road divided left and right,
No signpost there to guide;
The right hand road lay cold and white;
The left hand, bathed in sunshine, bright,
And fair and smooth and wide;
So to the left rode Harbottle, Sillitoe, Griggs, and Briggs,
and Buller-Brown,
And Grumby on the grey.

The fair wide road became a lane,
And to a cart-track shrank amain—
A cart-track, and at that not plain—
And fretful men were they;
Each in his glum fore-boding shut,
Thro' fields forlorn they filed,
And followed till the grass-grown rut,
By wains of early England cut,
Was lost in empty wild.

And empty, wild, were Harbottle, Sillitoe, Griggs, and
Briggs, and Buller-Brown,
And Grumby on the grey.

And now with caution, now with haste,
Now South, now North, now East, they faced,
Now madly spurring thro' the waste
(For frantic men were they),
Anon they thundered unawares
Upon a guilty man—
A simple rustic setting snares.
Image of evil, sowing tares,
He leapt, and looked, and ran;
And after him rode Harbottle, Sillitoe, Griggs, and Briggs,
and Buller-Brown,
And Grumby on the grey.

Dark visions of a felon's jail,
His wife's despair, his children's wail,
Were lifted from him as a veil,
When questioned, blown, at bay.
His red right hand out straight he threw:
"Hare-Park?" he mused, "Hare-Park?"
As one would indicate Peru,
Just where the distance met the blue
His arm described an arc.
And fuming left him Harbottle, Sillitoe, Griggs, and
Briggs, and Buller-Brown,
And Grumby on the grey.

All thro' the waning afternoon
They pricked towards the dead-white moon:
No trace, no sign of lord or loon:
Before them backed away
The same long, bleak horizon line,
The same grimacing whins,
The same daft sheep, the same croaked whine,
The same wide down, out-rolled, supine,
As like as any pins;
Doggèd, depressed, rode Harbottle, Sillitoe, Griggs, and
Briggs, and Buller-Brown,
And Grumby on the grey.



FRANCIS DUKINFELD ASTLEY, ESQ., AND HIS HARRIERS

From the engraving by R. Woodman after Ben Marshall



By whins and sheep, morose, adroop,
Until the sun's long westering stoop
Shot out before the jaded troop

His last expiring ray:

It flickered thro' the wood-smoke's haze,

Domestic, fragrant, warm,

On happy homesteads, miry ways,

And lighted in a final blaze

Upon a scarlet form!

Then leapt the hearts of Harbottle, Sillitoe, Griggs, and

Briggs, and Buller-Brown,

And Grumby on the grey.

They cried, "'Tis Ben, the Whipper-in—

His shoulders and his cheery grin;

And yon's the wood the hounds are in,

My soul—my life—I'll lay!"

Then spurred they o'er the space between,

And naught could stay or hold:

Beyond the turf-land, sound and green,

Yawned a morass, obscure, unclean,

Loathly, and dank, and cold;

But into it plunged Harbottle, Sillitoe, Griggs, and Briggs,

and Buller-Brown,

And Grumby on the grey.

And tho' the rank slough sucked and clogged,

They wallowed, floundered, dragged, and flogged,

Until triumphant, waterlogged,

Unsavoury men were they;

Smothered in slime from spurs to stocks,

Unflinching, keen as—mules,

No sign of huntsman, hound, or fox:

Naught but a rural letter-box,

Erect, regardant, gules.

Came dreadful words from Harbottle, Sillitoe, Griggs,

and Briggs, and Buller-Brown,

And Grumby on the grey.

A crimson smoulder in the West;

The last late crow had won to rest;

A breath of ice that gripped the chest—

And freezing died the day.

A hoof-struck flint-spark lit the gloam,
A shivering horn-shake rang;
With hammering drum on lane and loam,
And pattering feet as light as foam,
And crop-thong's whistling bang,
At last the Hounds met Harbottle, Sillitoe, Griggs, and
Briggs, and Buller-Brown,
And Grumby on the grey.

"Good-night," the Huntsman cried, "Good-night,
Been with the harriers, eh? All right,
You've missed a clinking day——"
But raving home went Harbottle, Sillitoe, Griggs, and Briggs,
and Buller-Brown,
And Grumby on the grey.

R. J. Richardson.

The First Day of Spring

The first day of spring in the year ninety-three,
The first recreation was in this country,
The King's county gentlemen o'er hills, dales and rocks,
They rode out so jovially in search of a fox.

Chorus—

Tally ho hark away, Tally ho hark away, Tally ho
Hark away, me boys, away, hark away!

When Reynard was started he faced Tullamore,
Arklow and Wicklow along the seashore.
We kept his brush in view every yard of the way,
And he straight took his course thro' the streets of Roscrea.

Chorus—Tally ho, etc.

But Reynard, sly Reynard, lay hid there that night,
And they swore they would watch him until the daylight;
Early next morning the woods they did resound
With the echo of horns and the sweet cry of hounds.

Chorus—Tally ho, etc.

When Reynard was started he faced to the hollow
Where none but the hounds and the footmen could follow,
The gentlemen cried "Watch him, watch him! what shall we do?
If the rocks do not stop him he will cross Killaloe!"

Chorus—Tally ho, etc.

When Reynard was taken, his wishes to fulfil,
He called for ink and paper and pen to write his will;
And what he made mention of they found it no *blank*,
For he gave them a *check* on the National *Bank*!

Chorus—Tally ho, etc.

To you, Mr. Casey, I give my whole estate;
And to you, young O'Brien, my money and my plate;
And I give to you, Sir Francis, my whip, spurs, and cap,
For you crossed walls and ditches and ne'er looked for a gap!

Chorus—

Tally ho hark away, Tally ho hark away, Tally ho
Hark away, me boys, away, hark away!

Irish Traditional.

A Hunting Song

A RUM ONE TO FOLLOW, A BAD ONE TO BEAT

Come, I'll give you the health of a man we all know,
A man we all swear by, a friend of our own;
With the hounds running hardest, he's safest to go,
And he's always in front, and he's often alone.
A rider unequall'd—a sportsman complete,
"A rum one to follow, a bad one to beat."

As he sits in the saddle a baby could tell
He can hustle a sticker, a flyer can spare;
He has science, and nerve, and decision as well,
He knows where he's going and means to be there.
The first day I saw him they said at the meet,
"That's a rum one to follow, a bad one to beat."

We threw off at the Castle, we found in the holt,
Like wild-fire the beauties went streaming a-way;
From the rest of the field he came out like a bolt,
And he tackled to work like a schoolboy to play,
As he ramm'd down his hat and got home in his seat,
"This rum one to follow, this bad one to beat."

'Twas a caution, I vow, but to see the man ride!
O'er the rough and the smooth he went sailing along;
And what Providence sent him, he took in his stride,
Tho' the ditches were deep, and the fences were strong.
Thinks I, "If he leads me I'm in for a treat,
With 'this rum one to follow, this bad one to beat.' "

Ere they'd run for a mile, there was room in the front,
Such a scatter and squander you never did see!
And I honestly own I'd been out of the hunt,
But the broad of his back was the beacon for me.
So I kept him in sight, and was proud of the feat,
"This rum one to follow, this bad one to beat!"

Till we came to a rasper as black as your hat,
You couldn't see over—you couldn't see through;
So he made for the gate, knowing what he was at,
And the chain being round it, why over he flew!
While I swore a round oath that I needn't repeat,
At "this rum one to follow, this bad one to beat."

For a place I lik'd better I hasten'd to seek;
But the place I lik'd better I sought for in vain;
And I honestly own, if the truth I must speak,
That I never caught sight of my leader again.
But I thought, "I'd give something to have his receipt,
This rum one to follow, this bad one to beat."

They told us that night he went best through the run,
They said that he hung up a dozen to dry,
When a brook in the bottom stopped most of their fun,
But I know that I never went near it, not I.
For I found it a fruitless attempt to compete
With "this rum one to follow, this bad one to beat."

So we'll fill him a bumper as deep as you please,
And we'll give him a cheer; for deny it who can,
When the country is roughest he's most at his ease;
When the run is severest, he rides like a man,
And the pace cannot stop, nor the fences defeat
"This rum one to follow, this bad one to beat."

G. J. Whyte-Melville.

The Fox of One Tree Hill

Whoile the M.F.H. were relaxin' un's mind
There oop at the spinney who should un find
Round Turner's Corner, again the Mill—
But the game old fox o' One Tree Hill.

For that old fox they'd draw'd each week
An' un play'd 'em regler hide 'n seek,
There worn't nary trick that un couldn't play
Ud go down wind an' run all day.

So the Maister says—"My be-cauty," says 'e,
"To-morrow your brush shall belong to me,
I'll lay 'em on—an' I'll have a kill
If I roides all night raound One Tree Hill!"

There was Maister an' there was Maister's son,
An' huntsman Jarge on the wall-eyed dun,
An' Kernel, an' Doctor who rode un's bay—
An' Parson Blake on un's big old grey.

Come sun-up for One Tree Hill they rides
To ketch the old beggar afore un hides,
But lor! he's got eyes in un's head to see,
As un sits on the hill, "alright" says 'e.

They scents un's drag by Marler's Plain—
An' at Peasmash Cross had lost 'im again,
For a toime they're check'd as check can be
When un's found lookin' on at the fun from a tree!

Jarge routs un down an' gives un law
To be wuss off then than a wos afore,
As *they* couldn't find which way un went—
For you carn't go on if there ain't no scent!

An' back they goes from One Tree Hill
Wi'out a brush and wi'out a kill,
An' all of em lost their tempers sad,
An' only Parson didn't talk bad.

Then One Tree Hill got white with snow
An' huntin' ne'er horse nor hounds could go:
Whoile the game old fox more coxy grew,
Ud pass the kennels with "how d'ye do!"

But the frost gave out an' the Maister say—
"We'll run to the kill if we run all day!
We've stopp'd un's earths, an' *must* go full cry,
To-day shall the darned old varmint die!"

Un broke, an' led 'em a staying trot
Thro' Bogle Fallows to Maunder's lot—
Raound Weasel's Hollow by Ten Mile Patch—
Oop Barlow's Common to Tizzle Thatch.

Un tore like blazes thro' Boomers End—
Shot Tibbles, an' Boddors an' Alder's Bend—
An' passing Mudlands an' Rotten Log,
Un landed 'em all in Treacher's Bog!

They was late gettin' home, an' the Maister says he—
"Naow all the field must hev dinner with me.
Parson, Kernel, an' Doctor, an' Huntsman an' Whips—
Must drink to our fox of the Hill with Hips!"

Th' old fox got partial to fowl an' to duck,
(An' arter un's run un wos hungry—wuss luck)
An' tried one o' Farmer's—who thought it a waste—
For birds to be eat wi'out sauces or baste.

So to stop it 'er got on un's stack wi' un's gun—
Expectin' t'old fox to come arter un's run—
An' jest as ud got un a bird by un's head
Un up wi' un's gun an' er dropp'd un down dead.

As Jim were a-leavin' the Pollards that night
From over the wall, un just sees the whole sight;
Tho' wot un ud seen, ad med un quite sick,
Un hurried to Maister to tell of un quick.

An' the beautiful creetur, worth pounds an' pounds,
An' speshally made to be killed by hounds,
Lay shot thro' un's head—as you'd shoot an old rat!
Ud been *killed wi' a gun*—like a poachin' cat!

Wal—they drank to un's health, when rap! at the door
Come Jim (from the Pollards) to say Farmer Moore—
Had shot the old fox o' the Hill thro' the head:
(Us wouldn't repeat the words as 'em said!)

The Justices 'ad un before 'em to-day
An' took both un's gun an' un's license away,
Un's to spend all next Sunday fix'd up in the stocks—
Wrote up as a man who hev' murder'd a Fox.

Anonymous.



RICHARD DAVIS: HUNTSMAN TO H.M. HARRIERS (1789-1893)

From the painting by his son, R. B. Davis (1782-1854)



Batchelor's Hall

To Batchelor's Hall we good fellows invite
To partake, of the chace to make up our delight
We have spirits like fire and of health such a stock
That our pulses strike the seconds as true as the clock.
Did you see us you'd swear as we mounted with grace,
That Dianna had dubb'd some new Gods of the chace.

Chorus—

Hark away, hark away, all nature looks gay,
And Aurora with smiles ushers in the bright day.

Dick Thickset came mounted upon a fine black,
A better fleet gelding ne'er hunter did lack,
Tom Trig rode a bay full of metal and bone,
And gaily Bob Buxom rode proud on a rone.
But the horse of all horses that rivalled the day
Was the Squire's Neck-or-nothing and that a good grey.

Chorus—

Hark away, hark away, all nature looks gay,
Let's drink to the joys of the next coming day.

Then for hounds there was Nimble, so well climb'd the rocks,
And Cocknose, a good one at scenting a fox,
Little Punge, like a mole that will ferret and search,
And beetle-brow'd Hawke's Eye for dread at a lurch.
Young Sly-looks that scents the strong breeze from the South
And Musical Echoes well with his deep mouth.
O'er horses thus all of the very best blood,
'Tis not likely you'll easily find such a stud,
And for hounds our opinions with thousands we'll back
That all England through can't produce such a pack.

Chorus—

Hark away, hark away, all nature looks gay,
Let's drink to the joys of the next coming day.

Thus having described your dogs, horses and crew,
Away we set off, for the fox is in view,
Sly Reynard's brought home while the horns sound a call,
And now your all welcome to Batchelor's Hall—
The savory surloin grateful smokes on the board,
And Bacchus pours wine from his favourite hoard,
Come on then do honor to this joyful place
And enjoy the sweet pleasures that spring from the chace.

Chorus—

Hark away, hark away, all nature looks gay,
Let's drink to the joys of the next coming day.

Anon., 1680.

Go Hark!

Yon sound's neither sheep-bell nor bark,
They're running—they're running, Go hark!
The sport may be lost by a moment's delay,
So whip up the puppies and scurry away.
Dash down through the covert by dingle and dell,
There's a gate at the bottom—I know it full well;
And they're running—they're running,
Go hark!

They're running—they're running, Go hark!
One fence and we're out of the park;
Sit down in your saddles and race at the brook,
Then smash at the bull-finch, no time for a look;
Leave cravens and skitters to dangle behind;
He's away for the moors in the teeth of the wind,
And they're running—they're running,
Go hark!

They're running—they're running, Go hark!
Let them run on and run till it's dark!
Well with them we are, and well with them we'll be,
While there's wind in our horses and daylight to see,
Then shog along homeward, chat over the fight,
And hear in our dreams the sweet music all night
Of—They're running—they're running,
Go hark!

Charles Kingsley.

Three Jolly Huntsmen

I

There were three jolly Huntsmen
Went out to hunt the fox,
And where do you think they found him?
Why, among the hens and cocks!

Chorus—

Tally-ho! Tally-ho! Stick to it, my boys!
Was all the huntsmen's cry!
A Hip-hurra, and a Halloo,
As through the woods they fly!

II

Now first they met a blind man
As blind as he could be.
He swore he saw Beau Reynard
Run up a hollow tree.

Chorus—

III

Next they met a Ploughman,
Coming along the way.
He swore he saw Beau Reynard
Asleep among the hay.

Chorus—

IV

Then they met a Sailor,
Covered all over with pitch.
He swore he saw Beau Reynard
A-hiding in a ditch.

Chorus—

v

Next they came to a Parson,
And he was dressed in black,
He swore he saw Beau Reynard
Jump over the Huntsman's back.

Chorus—

vi

And last they met a Soldier,
His coat was red as blood,
He swore he saw Beau Reynard
A-dying in the wood.

Chorus—

Tally-ho! Tally-ho! Stick to it, my boys!
Was all the huntsmen's cry,
A Hip-hurra, and a Halloo,
As through the woods they fly!

Traditional.

A Hunting Song

THE GOOD GREY MARE

*(Dedicated to the Honourable ROBERT GRIMSTON, in kindly remembrance
of many happy days and pleasant rides)*

Oh! once I believed in a woman's kiss,
I had faith in a flattering tongue:
For lip to lip was a promise of bliss,
When lips were smooth and young.
But now the beard is grey on my cheek,
And the top of my head gets bare;
So little I speak, like an Arab scheik,
But put my trust in my mare.

For loving looks grow hard and cold,
Fair heads are turned away,
When the fruit has been gather'd—the tale been told,
And the dog has had his day;
But chance and change 'tis folly to rue,
And say I, the devil may care!
Nor grey nor blue are so bonny and true
As the bright brown eye of my mare, of my mare,
As the bright brown eye of my mare!

It is good for a heart that is chill'd and sad
With the death of a vain desire,
To borrow a glow that shall make it glad
From the warmth of a kindred fire.
And I leap to the saddle a man indeed;
For all I can do and dare,
In the power and speed that are mine at need
While I sit on the back of my mare!

With the fair wide heav'n above outspread
The fair wide plain to meet,
With the lark and his carol high over my head,
And the bustling pack at my feet—
I feel no fetter, I know no bounds,
I am free as a bird in the air;
While the covert resounds in a chorus of hounds,
Right under the nose of the mare.

We are in for a gallop—away! away!

I told them my beauty could fly:
And we'll lead them a dance ere they catch us to-day,

For we *mean* it, my lass and I!
She skims the fences, she scours the plain,
Like a creature winged I swear,
With snort and strain on the yielding rein;
For I'm bound to humour the mare.

They have pleach'd it strong, they have dug it wide,
They have turn'd the baulk with the plough;
A horse that can cover the whole in its stride
Is cheap at a thousand, I vow:
So I draw her together, and over we sail,
With a yard and a half to spare—
Bank, bull-finch and rail 'tis the Curse of the vale,
But I leave it all to the mare!

Away! away! they've been running to kill,
With never a check from the find;
Away! away! we are close to them still,
And the field are *furlongs* behind:
They can hardly deny they were out of the game,
Lost half "the fun of the fair,"
Though the envious blame and the jealous exclaim,
"How that old fool buckets his mare!"

Who-whoop! they have him—they're round him! how
They worry and tear when he's down!
'Twas a stout hill-fox when they found him, now
'Tis a hundred tatters of brown!
And the riders arriving as best they can,
In panting plight declare,
That "First in the van was the old grey man,
Who stands by his old grey mare."

I have lived my life—I am nearly done,
I have play'd the game all round;
But I freely admit that the best of the fun
I owe it to horse and hound.
With a hopeful heart and a conscience clear,
I can laugh in your face, Black Care;
Though you're hovering near, there's no room for you here,
On the back of my good grey mare.

G. J. Whyte-Melville.

Hunting Hill

(In the year 1820 Jesse Russell, farmer of Edgemont in Pennsylvania, asked when dying that he might be buried on Hunting Hill, where he had always cheered hounds on to cry. This wish was granted. Hunting Hill is good covert to-day, and hounds find foxes there as regularly as ever.)

A churchyard lot? When I have gone to ground?
A stone that soon will tilt and moss with who to care?
What hint of horn, what wakening cry of hound,
What beat of hoofs on grass could ever reach me there?
You know I've always cheered them to the find!
So not the church. The grass is more my kind!

I've marked the place. They call it Hunting Hill.
Sound wood! I've jumped my foxes there past thirty year.
The sweetest find, I say, on Ridley still.
Rare scent for hounds to work at. Good spot, too, to hear
Them push him, once he leaves the white-oak side.
It's grass there—open honest grass to ride!

I want to feel it near me when I'm gone,
That Ridley grass! I've scythed and ricked it since 'twas
stump—
Lot pasture—poor starved barren stuff so long.
I'd like to hear the beech-nuts falling in the clump,
The sound of chestnut clubbing in the fall.
But most—hounds' tongue on grass! That most of all!

It's in my bones! It's part of me I say!
Some horn on Hunting Hill will sound the View again!
It must! Some challenge lift! Some ring-necks bay!
O God! To cheer! To hark them forrard in the lane!
You know I cannot leave it—not for good.
Not when my beauties wind him—no one could!



DEATH OF THE FOX

From the painting by J. Wootton (1678-1765)



In spring there'll be the dogwood all about,
With spicebush gold and bloodroot, squirrel-cup, cranes-bill.
Then

The blow of that wild cherry budding out,
So wide, just by the bare earth of the vixen's den.
I've watched her cubs there often try to chase
Our rabbits of an evening, brace for brace.

There'll be the cool of trees in summer too,
The friendly stir of rain in ash by Ridley Bend,
I used to rod for trout there. Many a do
Is good still, near the aspens and the Lower End,
Where poplar-cups like candles in the sun.
I've always liked old trees—that oak's the one.

You'll find it easily—white-oak—near the top.
Fair open grass below. The lane must be cut back
To make a decent hound way. So just lop
The worst of it for me and trim the brushwood slack—
Not much. Leave there the white wood asters—all.
They'll make me think of hunting—and the fall!

What more to ask? I'll rest there year by year,
Content enough—till corn is in and harvest through.
Then maybe—some way—fall by fall, I'll hear
Once more the music of those sweet notes on the dew!
God's will I wake a while and feel the thrill
When hounds score true to cry on Hunting Hill!

Clifton Lisle.

Ballad of Old Roman

Old Roman is dead, the brave Radnorshire hound,
A better bred dog never hunted the ground.
When Autumn appeared and the cornfields were shorn,
The morn was proclaimed by the heart-cheering horn.
Then no hound was like Roman, so eager and gay,
For dearly he lov'd the glad call "come away,"
But no more shall the horn call old Roman the brave,
For the Earth is his bed, and his kennel the grave.

Whene'er Roman quested his game he soon found,
Though it swam in the water or ran on the ground,
Sly Reynard in vain climb'd the mountains so steep,
Or the otter for safety div'd down in the deep.
The speed of the hare against Roman was vain,
For when Roman hunted his foes must be slain.
But no more shall the horn call old Roman the brave,
For the Earth is his bed, and his kennel the grave.

The strings of the harp nor the nightingale's song,
Could vie with the music of old Roman's tongue.
Nor could the proud steed though well trained for the race,
Match the speed that old Roman displayed in the chase.
And when he gave tongue to him each hound would fly,
For well the pack knew that he ne'er told a lie.
But no more shall the pack hark to Roman the brave,
For the Earth is his bed, and his kennel the grave.

One morning a hare in the woodlands was spi'd,
With rapture the joyful tantara was cri'd.
As old Roman in glory the gallant pack led,
He fell on the turf that now pillows his head.
And the grass on the mead that was verdant before,
With crimson was stained by the brave Roman's gore.
For the stout heart had burst of old Roman the brave,
Now the Earth is his bed, and his kennel the grave.

The sweet tongue of Roman for ever is mute,
Which was loud as the horn, and soft as the flute.
And dim are the eyes that once vivid did glow,
And crimson the skin that was black as the sloe.
The Huntsman stood weeping and hung down his head,
When he saw that the spirit of Roman was fled.
And the hands that had often fed Roman the brave,
In the meads of Brynderwen now dug Roman's grave.

May we, my good friends, when the last bugle sounds,
To call us away both from horses and hounds,
Be spotless as Roman, and fearless to die,
And to injure our neighbours have ne'er told a lie.
As long as we live we'll to friendship incline,
And discord we'll drown in the juice of the vine.
And drink in remembrance of Roman the brave,
And be mellow the turf that lies over his grave.

George Thomas.

The Hunting Day

(SONG DEDICATED TO THE NORTH WARWICKSHIRE HUNT)

What a fine hunting day, 'tis as balmy as May,
And the hounds to the village will come:
Ev'ry friend will be there, and all trouble and care
Will be left far behind them at home.
See! servants and steeds on their way,
And sportsmen their scarlet display:
Let us join the glad throng that goes laughing along,
And we'll all go a-hunting to-day.

Chorus—

We'll all go a-hunting to-day,
All nature looks smiling and gay,
So we'll join the glad throng
That goes laughing along,
And we'll all go a-hunting to-day.

Farmer Hodge to his dame says, "I'm sixty and lame,
Times are hard yet my rent I must pay,
But I don't care a jot, if I raise it or not,
For I will go a-hunting to-day;
There's a fox in the spinney they say,
We shall find him and get him away,
I'll be first in the rush, and ride hard for the brush,
So I must go a-hunting to-day."

Chorus—

I *must* go a-hunting to-day,
All nature looks smiling and gay,
So we'll join the glad throng
That goes laughing along,
And we'll all go a-hunting to-day.

There's the doctor in boots, with a breakfast that suits,
Of strong home-brew'd ale and good beef,
And his patients in pain say, "We're come once again
To consult you in hope of relief."

To the poor he advice gave away,
For the rich he prescrib'd and took pay,
But to each one he said, "You will shortly be dead
If you don't go a-hunting to-day!"

Chorus—

You *must* go a-hunting to-day,
All nature looks smiling and gay,
So we'll join the glad throng
That goes laughing along,
And we'll all go a-hunting to-day.

As the Judge sits in court, he gets wind of the sport,
For the lawyers apply to adjourn;
As no witnesses come, and there's none found at home,
They have followed the Hounds and the Horn.
Says his Worship, "Great fines they must pay,
If they will not our summons obey,
Yet, it's very fine sport, so we'll break up the Court
And we'll all go a-hunting to-day."

Chorus—

We'll all go a-hunting to-day,
All nature looks smiling and gay,
So we'll join the glad throng
That goes laughing along,
And we'll all go a-hunting to-day.

Then the village bells chime, there's a wedding at nine,
And the parson unites the fond pair;
Then he hears the sweet sound of the Horn and the Hound,
And he knows 'tis his time to be there;
Says he, "For your welfare I'll pray,
And regret I no longer can stay,
Now you're safely made one, I must quickly be gone,
For I *must* go a-hunting to-day."

Chorus—

I *must* go a-hunting to-day,
All nature looks smiling and gay,
So we'll join the glad throng
That goes laughing along,
And we'll all go a-hunting to-day.

None were left in the lurch, for all friends at the church
With Beadle and Clerk and all near,
Soon determined to go and to shout "Tally Ho,"
And the Ringers all join'd in the rear.
With Bridegroom and Bride in array,
One and all to each other did say,
"Let us join the glad throng, that goes laughing along,
And we'll all go a-hunting to-day."

Chorus—

We'll all go a-hunting to-day,
All nature looks smiling and gay,
So we'll join the glad throng
That goes laughing along,
And we'll all go a-hunting to-day.

There is only one cure for all maladies sure,
That reaches the heart to its core,
'Tis the sound of the Horn, on a fine hunting morn,
And where is the heart wishing more;
It turneth the grave into gay,
Makes pain unto pleasure give way,
Makes the weak become strong, and the old become young,
So we'll all go a-hunting to-day.

Chorus—

We'll all go a-hunting to-day,
All nature looks smiling and gay,
So we'll join the glad throng
That goes laughing along,
And we'll all go a-hunting to-day.

Wm. Williams.

A New Hunting Song

Hark, the huntsman's begun to sound his shrill horn
Come quickly unkennel the hounds;
Such a beautiful glittering golden-ey'd morn,
We'll chace the fox over the grounds.

See yonder's old Reynard, so crafty and sly,
Come saddle your coursers a-pace;
For the hounds have a scent and they're all in full cry,
They long to be giving him chace.

The huntsmen are mounted, their steeds feel the spur,
And swiftly they course it along;
Rapid after the fox, runs each musical cur,
Follow! Follow, my boys! is the song.

Over hills, over mountains, they skim it away,
Now Reynard's almost out of sight,
But rather than lose him we'll spend all the day,
For hunting is all our delight.

By eager pursuing, we'll have him at last,
He's tired, poor rogue, down he lies,
He starts up afresh, but young Sharp has him fast,
He trembles, kicks, struggles, and dies.

Traditional.

From "The Chase," Book III

For these nocturnal Thieves, Huntsman, prepare
Thy sharpest Vengeance. Oh! how glorious 'tis
To right th' oppress'd, and bring the Felon vile
To just Disgrace! E'er yet the Morning peep,
Or Stars retire from the first Blush of Day,
With thy far echoing Voice alarm thy Pack,
And rouse thy bold Compeers. Then to the Copse,
Thick with entangling grass, or prickly Furze,
With Silence lead thy many-colour'd Hounds,
In all their Beauty's Pride. See! how they range
Dispers'd, how busily this Way and that,
They cross, examining with curious Nose
Each likely Haunt. Hark! on the Drag I hear
Their doubtful Notes, preluding to a cry
More nobly full, and swell'd with ev'ry Mouth.
As straggling Armies, at the Trumpet's Voice,
Press to their Standard; hither all repair,
And hurry thro' the Woods; with hasty step
Rustling, and full of Hope; now driv'n on Heaps
They push, they strive; while from his kennel sneaks
The conscious Villain. See! he skulks along,
Sleek at the Shepherd's cost, and plump with Meals
Purloin'd. So thrive the Wicked here below.
Tho' high his Brush he bear, tho' tipt with white
It gaily shine; yet e'er the Sun declin'd
Recall the Shades of Night, the pamper'd Rogue
Shall rue his Fate revers'd, and at his Heels
Behold the just Avenger, swift to seize
His forfeit Head, and thirsting for his Blood.
Heavens! What melodious strains! How beat our Hearts
Big with tumultuous Joy! . . .

Hark! What loud Shouts
Re-echo thro' the Groves! he breaks away,
Shrill Horns proclaim his flight. Each straggling Hound
Strains o'er the Lawn to reach the distant Pack.



THE DEATH

From the painting by J. N. Sartorius (1755-1828)



'Tis Triumph all and Joy. Now my brave Youths,
Now give a loose to the clean gen'rous steed;
Flourish the Whip, nor spare the galling Spur,
But in the Madness of Delight, forget
Your Fears. Far o'er the rocky Hills we range,
And dangerous our Course; but in the Brave
True Courage never fails. In vain the Stream
In foaming Eddies whirls; in vain the Ditch
Wide-gaping threatens Death. The craggy Steep
Where the poor dizzy Shepherd crawls with Care,
And clings to ev'ry Twig, gives us no Pain;
But down we sweep, as stoops the Falcon bold
To pounce upon his Prey. . . .
What Lengths we pass! Where will the wand'ring Chace
Lead us bewilder'd! Smooth as Swallows skim
The new-shorn Mead, and far more swift we fly.
See my brave Pack; how to the Head they press,
Justling in close Array, then more diffuse
Obliquely wheel, while from their op'ning Mouths
The vollied Thunder breaks. . . .

. . . How far behind
The Hunter-Crew, wide-straggling o'er the Plain!
The panting Courser now with trembling Nerves
Begins to reel; urg'd by the goring Spur
Makes many a faint Effort. . . .

. . . Who without Grief
Can view that pamper'd Steed, his Master's Joy,
His Minion, and his daily Care, well cloath'd,
Well-fed with ev'ry nicer Cate; no Cost,
No Labour spar'd; who, when the flying Chace
Broke from the Copse, without a Rival led
The num'rous Train. Now a sad Spectacle
Of Pride brought low, and humbled Insolence,
Drove like a pannier'd Ass, and scourged along.
While these with loosen'd Reins, and dangling Heels,
Hang on their reeling Palfreys. . . .

. . . What biting thoughts
Torment th' abandon'd Crew! old Age laments
His vigour spent; the tall, plump, brawny Youth
Curses his cumb'rous Bulk, and envies now
The short Pygmean Race, he whilom kenn'd
With proud insulting Leer. A chosen few

Alone the Sport enjoy; nor droop beneath
Their pleasing Toils. Here, Huntsman, from this Height
Observe yon Birds of Prey; if I can judge,
'Tis there the Villain lurks, they hover round
And claim him as their own. . . .

. . . Was I not right?

See! There he creeps along; his Brush he drags,
. . . Thro' ev'ry Hole he sneaks, thro' ev'ry Jakes
Plunging he wades besmear'd, and fondly hopes
In a superior Stench to lose his own.
But, faithful to the Track, th' unerring Hounds
With Peals of echoing Vengeance close pursue.
And now distressed, no shelt'ring Covert near,
Into the Hen-roost creeps, whose Walls with Gore
Distain'd attest his Guilt. There, Villain, there
Expect thy Fate deserv'd. And soon from thence
The Pack inquisitive, with Clamour loud,
Drag out their trembling Prize. . . .

. . . In bolder Notes

Each sounding Horn proclaims the Felon dead:
And all th' assembled village shouts for Joy.
The Farmer, who beholds his mortal Foe
Stretch'd at his Feet, applauds the glorious Deed,
And grateful calls us to a short Repast.
In the full glass the liquid Amber smiles,
Our native Product. And his good old Mate
With choicest Viands heaps the lib'ral Board,
To crown our Triumphs, and reward our Toils.

William Somerville.

Rain

We have lauded the pack and the Master,
We have cheered for the Staff and the Horn,
And we've toasted the heart of the hunter,
And the find in the covert at dawn;
We have sung of the puppies—God bless 'em!
Of the breed and the bone we attain,
And the fox that is booked to bewitch 'em—
But I'll give you another—fall rain!

When the sod's like a bone in September,
And the fallows are bitter as rust,
And the grass is a scar to remember,
And the corn is dry-blistered with dust;
And the going is cruel as a cursing,
And our horses are racked from the strain,
It is then that we yearn past the telling
For the taste and the goodness of rain!

Till a silvery play in the maples,
And a quickening stir through the leaves,
Send a savour of hope to the beeches,
A content that the covert believes;
For the wind it has fetched us a blessing,
All the meadows are kindly again,
And the pents of the kennel are drumming
With the heart-easing murmur of rain!

Oh, the breath of wet thorn in the hedgerow!
And the sheen where the coulter has passed!
And the joy of turned headland and furrow,
And a green that's our birthright at last!
For the wastage of drought is behind us,
And the streams they are lusty again!
And our woodland rings merry in chorus
That's a chime above chimes after rain!

Clifton Lisle.

A Hunting Song

THE CLIPPER THAT STANDS IN THE STALL AT THE TOP
(*Dedicated to the Hon. CHARLES WHITE, Scots Fusilier Guards*)

Go strip him, lad! now sir, I think you'll declare
Such a picture you never set eyes on before:
He was bought in at Tatt's for three hundred, I swear,
And he's worth all the money to look at and more!
For the pick of the basket, the show of the shop,
Is the Clipper that stands in the stall at the top.

In the records of racing I read their career,
There were none of the sort but could gallop and stay;
At Newmarket his sire was the best of his year,
And the Yorkshiremen boast of his dam to this day;
But never a likelier foal did she drop
Than this Clipper that stands in the stall at the top.

A head like a snake, and a skin like a mouse,
An eye like a woman, bright, gentle and brown;
With loins and a back that would carry a house,
And quarters to lift him smack over a town!
What's a leap to the rest, is to him but a hop,
This Clipper that stands in the stall at the top.

When the country is deepest, I give you my word
'Tis a pride and a pleasure to put him along;
O'er fallow and pasture he sweeps like a bird,
And there's nothing too wide, nor too high, nor too strong;
For the ploughs cannot choke, nor the fences can crop,
This Clipper that stands in the stall at the top.

Last Monday we ran for an hour in the Vale,
Not a bullfinch was trimm'd, of a gap not a sign!
The ditches were double, each fence had a rail,
And the farmers had lock'd every gate in the line;
So I gave him the office, and over them—Pop!
Went this Clipper that stands in the stall at the top.

I'd a lead of them all when we came to the brook,
A big one—a bumper—and up to your chin!
As he threw it behind him, I turn'd for a look,
There were eight of us had it, and seven got in;
Then he shook his lean head, while he heard them go plop!
This Clipper that stands in the stall at the top.

Ere we got to the finish, I counted but few,
And never a coat without dirt, but my own;
To the good horse I rode all the credit was due,
When the others were tiring, he scarcely was blown;
For the best of the pace is unable to stop
The Clipper that stands in the stall at the top.

You may put on his clothes; ev'ry sportsman, they say,
In his lifetime has one that outrivals the rest;
So the pearl of *my* casket I've shown you to-day,
The gentlest, the gamest—the boldest, the best;
And I never will part, by a sale or a swop,
With my Clipper that stands in the stall at the top!

G. J. Whyte-Melville.

Bucks A-Hunting Go

With hound and horn each rosy morn
Let's bucks a-hunting go,
While all my fancy dwells with Nancy
And her sweet Tally-Ho.

Chorus—

Hark! sing Tally-Ho!
Hark! sing Tally-Ho!
Still my fancy dwells on Nancy,
Hark! sing Tally-Ho!

Was she my wife how sweet this life
In station high or low!
Midst war's alarms her music charms,
So her sweet Tally-Ho!

Chorus—

Hark! sing Tally-Ho!
Hark! sing Tally-Ho!
Still my fancy dwells on Nancy,
Hark! sing Tally-Ho!

Both heath or warren, tho' e'er so barren,
With her would fruitful grow,
Make violets spring, all verdure bring,
When she sings Tally-Ho!

Chorus—

Hark! sing Tally-Ho!
Hark! sing Tally-Ho!
Still my fancy dwells on Nancy,
Hark! sing Tally-Ho!

Sly Reynard runs over the grass so green,
The Hounds fast after him go,
No more they'll run, their sports be done,
If she sings Tally-Ho!

Chorus—

Hark! sing Tally-Ho!
Hark! sing Tally-Ho!
Still my fancy dwells on Nancy,
Hark! sing Tally-Ho!

The music of her voice I'm sure
Would charm poor Reynard's woe,
The chase would cease, and all be peace
If she sung Tally-Ho!

Chorus—

Hark! sing Tally-Ho!
Hark! sing Tally-Ho!
Still my fancy dwells on Nancy,
Hark! sing Tally-Ho!

So let's toast her health so free, my boys,
E'er home that we do go.
On May-Day seen my girl is Queen
When she sings Tally-Ho!

Chorus—

When she sings Tally-Ho!
When she sings Tally-Ho!
Still my fancy dwells on Nancy,
Hark! sing Tally-Ho!

Traditional.

The Muskerry Fox-Hunt

I

You Muses Nine, your aid combine
And I'll relate of Hunting,
Brave Captain Leader, of Mount Leader,
Exceeds all other Sportsmen.
For fishing, fowling, cocking, grouching,
And hunting in due season,
For steeplechase, fox hunt, or race,
All other Gentlemen he headed!

Chorus—

Hark, Tally-Ho! Hark, Tally-Ho!
Before we'll go,
We'll surely kill or earth him!

2

If you were to rove, through Connolly's Grove
On a fine September morning,
'Tis there ye'll see, Grand Quality,
A sight so fine and charming!
All dressed in red, with fiery steeds,
The sound of Leader's horn,
The cry of Hounds, did echo round,
And Reynard out before them!

*Chorus—*Hark, Tally-Ho! etc.

3

With prancing steeds, they wend indeed
Through Jim Mahony's fields most glorious,
And Leader boldly crossed the Lee
And safely landed over.
The other cowards, for want of courage
Said "Our lives we'll not endanger!"
But loud he cried, from Allan's side,
"Are ye from me retreating?"

*Chorus—*Hark, Tally-Ho! etc.



BREAKING COVER

From the painting by J. F. Herring (1795-1865)



4

He called his dogs all by their names,
 Did not want to sound the horn;
 And then they swam, straightway to him,
 And crossed the foaming water.

Chorus—Hark, Tally-Ho! etc.

5

There were not, six perches odd,
 Between horse, fox, and dogs,
 All along through Scornaught.
 "But I don't care," Bold Leader cried,
 "I'll watch his crafty motions!"
 Such leaps were never thrown before
 By anny mortal rider,
 Over hedges tall, and strong stone wall,
 On crafty track of Reynard.

Chorus—Hark, Tally-Ho! etc.

6

But out spoke the fox, "Now I am cot
 By Leader, that bold Sportsman!
 But I don't care, he rode sevaré,
 And saved me from being torn!"
 Here's to his health! To him good wealth!
 Long may he reign victorious!
 So fill to him now, for he is dry,
 For Hunting is Laborious!

Chorus—

Hark, Tally-Ho! Hark, Tally-Ho!
 Before we'll go
 We'll surely kill or earth him!

Pat Long.

The Hunt is Up

The Hunt is up, the Hunt is up,
And it is well-nigh day;
Harry, our King, has gone hunting
To bring his deer to bay.

The East is bright with morning light,
And darkness it is fled,
The merry horn wakes up the morn
To leave his idle bed.

Behold the skies with golden dyes
Are glowing all around;
The grass is green, and so are the treen
All laughing at the sound.

The horses snort to see the sport,
The dogs are running free,
The woods rejoice at the merry noise
Of "Hey tantara-tee-ree!"

The sun is glad to see us clad
All in our lusty green
And smiles in the sky as he riseth high
To see and to be seen.

Awake all men, I say again,
Be merry as you may,
For Harry, our King, is gone hunting
To bring his deer to bay.

Traditional.

N.B.—In one copy of this poem it was ascribed to Gray, and dated 1537.

Last Valentine's Day

Last Valentine's day, when bright Phœbus shone clear,
I had not been hunting for more than a year;

Taleo, taleo, taleo, taleo!

I mounted black Sloven, o'er the road made him bound,
For I heard the hounds challenge, and horns sweetly sound,

Taleo, taleo, taleo! taleo, taleo, taleo!

"Hallo into covert!" old Anthony cries,
No sooner he spoke, but the fox, Sir, he spies;

Taleo!

This being the signal, he then cracked his whip,
Taleo was the word, and away he did leap.

Taleo, taleo! taleo!

Then up rides Dick Dawson, who cared not a pin,
He sprang at the drain, but his horse tumbled in,

Taleo!

And as he crept out, why he spied the old ren',
With his tongue hanging out, stealing home to his den,

Taleo, taleo! taleo!

Our hounds and our horses were always as good
As ever broke covert, or dashed thro' the wood;

Taleo!

Old Reynard runs hard, but must certainly die,
"Have at you, old Tony!" Dick Dawson did cry.

Taleo, taleo! taleo!

The hounds they had run twenty miles now or more,
Old Anthony fretted, he cursed too, and swore;

Taleo!

But Reynard, being spent, soon must give up the ghost,
Which will heighten our joys when we come to each toast.

Taleo, taleo! taleo!

The day's sport being over the horns we will sound,
To the jolly fox-hunters let echo resound:

Taleo!

So fill up your glasses, and cheerfully drink,
To the honest true sportsman who never will shrink;

Taleo, taleo, taleo! taleo, taleo, taleo!

Anon., 1770.

St. Valentine's Day

To-day, all day, I rode upon the down
With hounds and horsemen, a brave company.
On this side in its glory lay the sea,
On that the Sussex Weald, a sea of brown.
The wind was light, and brightly the sun shone,
And still we galloped on from gorse to gorse,
And once, when checked, a thrush sang, and my horse
Pricked his quick ears as to a sound unknown.

I knew the Spring was come, I knew it even
Better than all by this, that through my chase
In bush and stone and hill and sea and heaven
I seemed to see and follow still your face.
Your face my quarry was, for it I rode,
My horse a thing of wings, myself a God.

Wilfred Scawen Blunt.

The Killruddery Hunt

I

Hark, hark, jolly sportsmen a while to my tale
Which to pay your attention I'm sure cannot fail.
'Tis of lads and of horses, and dogs that ne'er tire,
O'er stone walls and hedges thro' dale, bog, and briar,
A pack of such hounds and a set of such men,
'Tis a shrew'd chance if ever you meet with again,
Had Nimrod the mightiest of Hunters been there,
'Fore gad! He had shook like an aspin for fear!

2

In seventeen hundred and forty and four,
The fifth of December, I think 'twas no more,
At five in the morning, by most of the clocks,
We rode from Killruddery in search of a fox.
The Laughlinstown Landlord, the bold Owen Bray,
And Squire Adair, sure, was with us that day;
Joe Debil, Hall Preston, that huntsman so stout,
Dick Holmes, a few others, and so we set out.

3

We cast off our hounds for an hour or more
When Wanton set up a most tunable roar;
"Hark to Wanton!" cried Joe, and the rest were not slack,
For Wanton's no trifle esteem'd in the pack.
Old Bonny and Collier came readily in
And every hound joined in the musical din;
Had Diana been there she'd been pleas'd to the life,
And one of the lads got a Goddess to wife!

4

Ten minutes past nine was the time of the day,
When Reynard broke cover and this was his way;
As strong from Killegar, as tho' he could fear none,
Away he brush'd round by the house of Kilternan.
To Carrick Mines thence, and to Cheniwood then,
Steep Shank-hill he climb'd, and to Ballyman glen,
Bray common he cross'd, leap'd Lord Anglesea's wall,
And seem'd to say "Little I value you all!"

5

Thro' Rochestown Wood like an arrow he pass'd,
 And came to the steep hills of Dalkey at last;
 There gallantly plung'd himself into the sea,
 And said in his heart "Sure none dare follow me!"
 But soon to his cost, he perceiv'd that no bounds
 Could stop the pursuit of the staunch mettl'd hounds,
 His policy here did not serve him a rush,
 Five couple of tartars were hard at his brush!

6

To recover the shore, then again was his drift,
 But e'er he could reach to the top of the clift
 He found both of speed and of cunning a lack,
 Being way-laid and kill'd by the rest of the pack.
 At his death there were present the lads that I've sung,
 Save Laury, who riding a garron was flung,
 Thus ended, at length, a most delicate chace,
 That held us five hours and ten minutes space.

7

Each glass was adapted to freedom and sport,
 For party affairs we consign'd to the court,
 Thus we finish'd the rest of the day and the night,
 In gay flowing bumpers and social delight.
 Then till the next meeting, bid farewell each brother,
 So some they went one way and some went another;
 As Phœbus befriended our earlier roam
 So Luna took care in conducting us home.

Irish Traditional.

Tally-Ho!

There are soul-stirring chords in the fiddle and flute
When dancing begins in the hall,
And a goddess in muslin, that's likely to suit,
Is the mate of your choice for the ball.
But the player may strain every finger in vain,
And the fiddler may rosin his bow,
Nor flourish nor string such rapture shall bring,
As the music of sweet Tally-Ho!

There's a melody, too, in the whispering trees
When day has gone down in the West,
And a lullaby soft in the sigh of the breeze
That hushes the woods to their rest.
There are madrigals fair in the voices of air,
In the stream with its ripple and flow,
But a merrier tune shall delight us at noon,
In the music of sweet Tally-Ho.

When autumn is flaunting his banner of pride
For glory that summer has fled,
Arrayed in the robes of his royalty, dyed
In tawny and orange and red.
When the oak is yet rife with the vigour of life,
Though his acorns are dropping below,
Through bramble and brake shall the echoes awake,
To the ring of a clear Tally-Ho!

"A fox, for a hundred!" they know it, the pack,
Old Chorister always speaks true,
And the Whip from his corner is told to come back,
And forbid to go on for a view.
Now the varmint is spied, as he crosses the ride,
A tough old campaigner, I trow—
Long, limber and grey, see him stealing away
—Half a minute!—and then—Tally-Ho!

Mark Fanciful standing, all eye and all ear,
One second, ere, wild for the fun,
She is lashing along with the pace of a deer,
Her comrades to join in the run.
Your saddle you grip, gather bridle and whip,
Give your hunter the office to go,
In his rush through the air little breath is to spare
For the cheer of your wild Tally-Ho!

At the end of the wood the old farmer in brown,
On the back of his good little mare,
Shows a grin of delight and a jolly bald crown,
As he holds up his hat in the air.
Though at heart he's as keen as if youth were still green,
Yet (a secret all sportsmen should know)
Not a word will he say till the fox is away,
Then he gives you a real Tally-Ho!

There's a scent you may swear, by the pace that they drive;
You must tackle to work with a will,
For as sure as you stand in your stirrups alive
It's a case of a run and a kill.
So I wish you good speed, a good line, and a lead,
With the luck of each fence where it's low,
Not the last of the troop, may you hear the Who-Whoop,
Well pleased as you heard Tally-Ho!

G. J. Whyte-Melville.



THE KILL

From the painting by H. Alken, sen. (1785-1851)



The Dusky Night rides down the Sky

The dusky night rides down the sky
And ushers in the morn;
The hounds all join the glorious cry,
The Huntsman winds his horn:
Then a-hunting we will go.

The wife around her husband throws
Her arms, and begs him stay:
"My dear, it rains, it hails, it snows,
You will not hunt to-day?"
But a-hunting we will go.

A brushing fox in yonder wood
Secure to find we seek;
For why, I carried, sound and good,
A carload there last week;
And a-hunting we will go.

Away he goes, he flies the rout,
Their steed all spur and switch:
Some are thrown in, and some thrown out
And some thrown in the ditch:
But a-hunting we will go.

At length his strength to faintness worn,
Poor Reynard ceases flight;
Then, hungry, homeward we return
To feast away the night:
Then a-drinking we do go.

Henry Fielding.

A Sportsman's Greeting

I

Well met, brother Sportsman! What say'st to the morn?
Dost not think it a scent-laying day?
With the heart-cheering hounds, and enrapturing horn
To the Coppice let's hasten away!
The morning is fresh, and the winds are all still,
The daylight approaches apace,
The bright God of day tips with gold the blue hill,
And awaits for the charms of the Chace!

2

This morn, by a shepherd, hard by, I was told
That old Reynard has been in the field,
And stole a young lambkin away from the fold
Besides many more that he kill'd.
Then to horse let's away and abroad with the Hounds,
We'll draw yonder Copse if you please,
Where Echo shall double and treble the sounds,
And the traitor reclines at his ease.

3

'Tis agreed, come away, sound, sound the gay horn,
The Hounds are impatient to go,
And blushing Aurora, fair Queen of the Morn,
Will chide us for loitering so.
Up mountains we'll climb, and we'll dart thro' the woods,
The Hounds and the horn shall combine
With Echo's sweet notes, rolling over the floods,
May such raptures for ever be mine!

Traditional.

From "Reynard the Fox"

There was a general turn of faces,
The men and horses shifted places,
And round the corner came the Hunt,
Those feathery things, the hounds, in front,
Intent, wise, dipping, trotting, straying,
Smiling at people, shoving, playing,
Nosing to children's faces, waving
Their feathery sterns, and all behaving,
One eye to Dansey on Maroon.
Their padding cat-feet beat a tune,
And though they trotted up so quiet
Their noses brought them news of riot,
Wild smells of things with living blood,
Hot smells, against the grippers good,
Of weasel, rabbit, cat and hare,
Whose feet had been before them there,
Whose taint still tingled every breath;
But Dansey on Maroon was death,
So, though their noses roved, their feet
Larked and trit-trotted to the meet.

John Masefield.

A Southerly Wind and a Cloudy Sky

A southerly wind and a cloudy sky
Proclaim it a hunting morning,
Before the sun rises away we'll fly,
Dull sleep and our downy bed scorning,
To horse, my brave boys, and away!
Bright Phœbus the hills is adorning!
The face of all nature looks gay!
It's a beautiful Hunting Morning!
Then Hark! Hark! Forrad!
Tally-Ho! Tally-Ho! Tally-Ho!

Together, away, see the coverts appear,
The hound that strikes first cheer him up without fear.
Drag him on, hoyke! wind him, my steady old hound;
Drag him on, hoyke! wind him! The coverts resound.

How completely the coverts of furze they draw!
Who talks of Sestine to Minel.
Old Dasher now flourishes through the shaw,
Saucebox rose out of his kennel.
Away they fly as quick as thought,
The new-sown ground soon makes them fault,
Clap round the sheep stain, clap round, clap round!
Try back the deep plain, try back, try back!

Comfort bitch hits him off through the tall speering hedge,
Dragman boy leads him off through the late new-made sedge.
Hark forward! Hark forward! Hark forward! Brave boys!
Hark forward! Hark forward! Zounds! Don't make a noise.

We ride whip and spur for three hours' chase,
Our horses go panting and sobbing,
Old Dasher and Ringwood begin to race,
Ride on and give them some mobbing.

But hold, by Jove, you'll spoil the sport
For through the hounds you'll head them short.
Hark, Drummer! hark, hark!
Hark Tuner! Hark Tuner!

He's dodging and jumping at every bush,
Old Vixen has fastened her tooth in his brush
Whoop, tear him! Whoop, tear him!
He's fairly run down!
Whoop, tear him! Whoop, tear him!
Give Joe his half-crown.

Traditional.

The Huntsman's Story

I heard the Huntsman calling as he drew Three-acre Spinney;
He found a fox and hunted him and handled him ere night,
And his voice upon the hillside was as golden as a guinea,
And I ventured he'd done nicely—most respectful and polite—
Jig-jogging back to Kennels, and the stars were shining bright.

Old Jezebel and Jealous they were trotting at his stirrup;
The road was clear, the moon was up, 'twas but a mile or so;
He got the pack behind him with a chirp and with a chirrup,
And said he, "I had the secret from my Gran'dad long ago;
And all the old man left me, Sir, if you should want to know.

"And he was most a gypsy, Sir, and spoke the gypsy lingos,
But he knew of hounds and horses all as Nimrod might have
know'd:
When we'd ask him how he did it, he would say 'You little
Gringos,
I learnt it from a lady that I met upon the road;
In the hills of Connemara was this wondrous gift bestowed.'

"Connemara—County Galway—he was there in eighteen-thirty;
He was taking hounds to kennel, all alone, he used to say;
And the hills of Connemara, when the night is falling dirty,
Is an ill place to be left in when the dusk is turning grey,
An ill place to be lost in most at any time o' day.

"Adown the dismal mountains that night it blew tremendous,
A-sobbing like a giant and a-snorting like a whale,
When he saw beside the sheep track ('Holy Saints,' says he,
'defend us!')
A mighty dainty lady, dressed in green, and sweet and pale,
And she rode an all-cream pony with an Arab head and tail.

"Says she to him, 'Young gentleman, to you I'd be beholden
If you'd ride along to Fairyland this night beside o' me;
There's a fox that eats our chickens—them that lays the eggs that's
golden—
And our little fairy mouse-dogs, ah, 'tis small account they be,
Sure it wants an advertising pack to gobble such as he!'

"So Gran'dad says, 'Your servant, Miss,' and got his hounds together,

And the mountain-side flew open and they rode into the hill;
'Your country's one to cross,' says he, and rights a stirrup-leather;
And he found in half-a-jiffey, and he finished with a kill;
And the little fairy lady, she was with 'em with a will.

"Then 'O,' says she, 'young man,' says she, 'tis lonesome here in Faerie,

So won't you stay and hunt with us and never more to roam,
And take a bride'—she looks at him—'whose youth can never vary,

With hair as black as midnight and a breast as white as foam?'
And 'Thank you, Miss,' says Gran'dad, 'but I've got a wife at home!'

"Then, 'O young man,' says she, 'young man, then you shall take a bounty,

A bounty of my magic that may grant you wishes three:
Come make yourself the grandest man from out o' Galway County

To Dublin's famous city all of my good gramarye?"

And 'Thank you, Miss,' says Gran'dad, 'but such ain't no use to me.'

"But he said, since she was pressing of her fairy spells and forces,
He'd take the threefold bounty, lest a gift he'd seem to scorn:
He'd ask, beyond all other men, the trick o' hounds and horses,
And a voice to charm a woodland of a soft December morn,
And sons to follow after him, all to the business born.

"And—but here we are at home, Sir. Yes the old man was a terror

For his fairies and his nonsense, yet the story's someways right;
He'd the trick o' hounds and horses to a marvel—and no error;
And to hear him draw a woodland was a pride and a delight;
And—*was it luck entirely, Sir, I killed my fox to-night?*"

Patrick R. Chalmers.

Old Towler

Bright Chanticleer proclaims the dawn
And spangles deck the thorn.
The lowing herd now quits the lawn,
The lark springs from the corn.
Dogs, huntsmen round the window throng,
Fleet Towler leads the cry,
Arise the burden of my song
This day the stag must die.

Chorus—

With hey, ho, chevy!
Hark forward, hark forward, Tantivy!
Hark, hark, Tantivy!
This day the stag must die.

The cordial takes its merry round
The laugh and joke prevail,
The Huntsman blows a jovial sound,
The dogs snuff up the gale.
The upland hills they sweep along,
O'er fields thro' breaks they fly,
The game is roused, too true the song,
This day the stag must die.

Poor stag, the dogs thy haunches gore,
The tears run down thy face,
The Huntsman's pleasures are no more,
His joys were in the chase.
Alike the gen'rous Sportsman burns
To win the blooming fair,
But yet he honours each by turns,
They each become his care.

Chorus—

With hey, ho, chevy!
Hark forward, hark forward, Tantivy!
Hark, hark, Tantivy!
This day the stag must die.

O'Keeffe.



HUNTSMEN SETTING OUT

From the painting by G. Stubbs (1724-1806)



From "As You Like It"

What shall he have that killed the deer?
His leathern skin and horns to wear,
Then sing him home:
Take thou no scorn to wear the horn,
It was a crest ere thou wast born:
Thy father's father wore it,
And thy father bore it:
The horn, the horn, the lusty horn,
Is not a thing to laugh to scorn.

William Shakespeare.

After the Chace

This Hart rused, and stole away
From all the houndes a privie way
The Houndes had overshot him all,
And were on a default y-fall.
Therewith the Huntë, wonderfast
Blew a "Forloyn"* at the last.
I was go-walkèd fro my tree
And as I went there came by mee
A whelp, that fawned me as I stood,
That had y-followed, and coulde no good.
It came and crept to mee so low
Right as it haddé mee y-know.
Held down his head, and joyned his eares,
And laid all smoothé down his heres.
I would have caught it—and anon
It fled, and was fro mee agone
And I him followed. . . ."

*From "The Booke of the Duchess Blanche"
(wife of John of Gaunt).*

The "Lost" call = "Verloren."

From "The Lady of the Lake"

Canto First

VI

'Twere long to tell what steeds gave o'er,
As swept the hunt through Cambus-more;
What reins were tighten'd in despair
When rose Benledi's ridge in air;
Who flagg'd upon Bochastle's heath,
Who shun'd to stem the flooded Teith,
For twice that day, from shore to shore,
The gallant stag swam stoutly o'er.
Few were the stragglers, following far,
That reach'd the lake of Venachar;
And when the Brigg of Turk was won,
The headmost horseman rode alone.

VII

Alone, but with unbated zeal,
That horseman plied the scourge and steel;
For jaded now, and spent with toil,
Emboss'd with foam, and dark with soil,
While every gasp with sobs he drew,
The labouring stag strain'd full in view.
Two dogs of black Saint Hubert's breed,
Unmatch'd for courage, breath, and speed,
Fast on his flying traces came
And all but won that desperate game.
For scarce a spear's length from his haunch
Vindictive toil'd the bloodhounds staunch;
Nor nearer might the dogs attain,
Nor farther might the quarry strain.
Thus up the margin of the lake,
Between the precipice and brake,
O'er stock and rock their race they take.

VIII

The Hunter mark'd that mountain high,
The lone lake's western boundary,
And deem'd the stag must turn to bay,
Where that huge rampart barr'd the way

The wily quarry shunn'd the shock,
And turn'd him from the opposing rock;
Then, dashing down a darksome glen,
Soon lost to hound and hunter's ken.
In the deep Trosach's wildest nook
His solitary refuge took,
There, while close couch'd, the thicket shed
Cold dews and wildflowers on his head,
He heard the baffled dogs in vain
Rave through the hollow pass amain,
Chiding the rocks that yell'd again.

IX

Close on the hounds the hunter came,
To cheer them on the vanish'd game,
But, stumbling in the rugged dell,
The gallant horse exhausted fell.
The impatient rider strove in vain
To rouse him with the spur and rein,
For the good steed, his labours o'er,
Stretch'd his stiff limbs, to rise no more.
Then, touch'd with pity and remorse,
He sorrow'd o'er the expiring horse.
"I little thought, when first thy rein
I slack'd upon the banks of Seine
That Highland eagle e'er should feed
On thy fleet limbs, my matchless steed!
Woe worth the chase, woe worth the day,
That costs thy life, my gallant grey!"

Sir Walter Scott.

Blow thy Horn, Hunter

Blow thy Horn, Hunter,
Come blow thy horn on high;
In yonder wood there lies a doe,
In faith, she will not die;
Come, blow thy horn, Hunter,
Come, blow thy horn, jolly Hunter.

Fare thee well, Lady,
The day doth break on high;
And Hounds and Horn proclaim the morn
Is surely passing by;
So fare thee well, Lady;
Now fare thee well, dearest Lady.

Sound the horn, Huntsman,
Now sound the horn on high:
The chase is done, the race is won,
And homewards now we hie:
So sound the horn, Huntsman:
Now sound the horn, jolly Huntsman.

William Cornish.

A Runnable Stag

When the pods went pop on the broom, green broom,
And apples began to be golden-skinned,
We harboured a stag in the Priory coomb,
And we feathered his trail up-wind, up-wind,
We feathered his trail up-wind—
A stag of warrant, a stag, a stag,
A runnable stag, a kingly crop,
Brow, bay and tray and three on top,
A stag, a runnable stag.

Then the huntsman's horn rang yap, yap, yap,
And "Forwards" we heard the harbourer shout;
But 'twas only a brocket that broke a gap
In the beechen underwood, driven out,
From the underwood antlered out
By warrant and might of the stag, the stag,
The runnable stag, whose lordly mind
Was bent on sleep, though beamed and tined
He stood, a runnable stag.

So we tufted the covert till afternoon
With Tinkerman's Pup and Bell-of-the-North;
And hunters were sulky and hounds out of tune
Before we tufted the right stag forth,
Before we tufted him forth.
The stag of warrant, the wily stag,
The runnable stag with his kingly crop,
Brow, bay and tray and three on top,
The royal and runnable stag.

It was Bell-of-the-North and Tinkerman's Pup
That stuck to the scent till the copse was drawn.
"Tally ho! Tally ho!" and the hunt was up.
The tufters whipped and the pack laid on,
The resolute pack laid on.
And the stag of warrant away at last,
The runnable stag, the same, the same,
His hoofs on fire, his horns like flame,
A stag, a runnable stag.

“Let your gelding be: if you check or chide
He stumbles at once and you're out of the hunt;
For three hundred gentlemen, able to ride,
On hunters accustomed to bear the brunt,
Accustomed to bear the brunt,
Are after the runnable stag, the stag,
The runnable stag with his kingly crop,
Brow, bay and tray and three on top,
The right, the runnable stag.”

By perilous paths in coomb and dell,
The heather, the rocks, and the river-bed,
The pace grew hot, for the scent lay well,
And a runnable stag goes right ahead,
The quarry went right ahead—
Ahead, ahead, and fast and far;
His antlered crest, his cloven hoof,
Brow, bay and tray and three aloof,
The stag, the runnable stag.

For a matter of twenty miles and more,
By the densest hedge and the highest wall,
Through herds of bullocks he baffled the lore
Of harbourer, huntsmen, hounds and all,
Of harbourer, hounds and all—
The stag of warrant, the wily stag,
For twenty miles, and five and five,
He ran, and he never was caught alive,
This stag, this runnable stag.

When he turned at bay in the leafy gloom,
In the emerald gloom where the brook ran deep,
He heard in the distance the rollers boom,
And he saw in a vision of peaceful sleep,
In a wonderful vision of sleep,
A stag of warrant, a stag, a stag,
A runnable stag in a jewelled bed,
Under the sheltering ocean dead,
A stag, a runnable stag.

So a fateful hope lit up his eye,
And he opened his nostrils wide again,
And he tossed his branching antlers high
As he headed the hunt down Charlock glen,
As he raced down the echoing glen
For five miles more, the stag, the stag,
For twenty miles, and five and five,
Not to be caught now, dead or alive,
The stag, the runnable stag.

Three hundred gentlemen, able to ride,
Three hundred horses as gallant and free,
Beheld him escape on the evening tide,
Far out till he sank in the Severn Sea,
Till he sank in the depths of the sea—
The stag, the buoyant stag, the stag
That slept at last in a jewelled bed
Under the sheltering ocean spread,
The stag, the runnable stag.

John Davidson.



THE DEATH

From the painting by J. N. Sartorius (1755-1828)



From "The Lady of the Lake"

Huntsman, rest! Thy chase is done;
While our slumbrous spells assail ye.
Dream not with the rising sun
Bugles here shall sound réveillé.

Sleep! The deer is in his den;
Sleep! Thy hounds are by thee lying;
Sleep! Nor dream in yonder glen
How thy gallant steed lay dying.

Huntsman, rest! Thy chase is done,
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye
Here no bugles sound réveillé.

Sir Walter Scott.

From "A Midsummer Night's Dream"

ACT IV—SCENE I

THESEUS

My love shall hear the music of my hounds
Uncouple in the western valley; go—
Despatch, I say, and find the forester—
We will, fair Queen, up to the mountain's top
And mark the musical confusion
Of Hounds and Echo in conjunction.

HYPPOLITA

I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
With hounds of Sparta; never did I hear
Such gallant chiding; for besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seem'd all one mutual cry; I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

THESEUS

My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
So flew'd, so sanded; and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
Crook-kneed, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls,
Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tunable
Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly;
Judge when you hear—

William Shakespeare.

The Old Squire

I like the hunting of the hare
Better than that of the fox;
I like the joyous morning air,
And the crowing of the cocks.

I like the calm of the early fields
The ducks asleep by the lake,
The quiet hour which Nature yields,
Before mankind is awake.

I like the pheasants and feeding things
Of the unsuspecting morn;
I like the flap of the wood-pigeon's wings
As she rises from the corn.

I like these things, and I like to ride
When all the world is in bed,
To the top of the hill where the sky grows wide
And where the sun grows red.

The beagles at my horse heels trot
In silence after me;
There's Ruby, Roger, Diamond, Dot,
Old Slut and Margery,—

A score of names well-used and dear,
The names my childhood knew;
The horn with which I rouse their cheer,
Is the horn my father blew.

I like the hunting of the hare
Better than that of the fox;
The new world still is all less fair
Than the old world it mocks.

The hare herself no better loves
The field where she was bred
Than I the habit of these groves,
My own inherited.

I know my quarries every one,
The meuse where she sits low;
The road she chose to-day was run
A hundred years ago.

I like the hunting of the hare;
New sports I hold in scorn,
I like to be as my fathers were
In the days ere I was born.

Wilfred Scawen Blunt.

The Little Red Rover

I

The dewdrop is clinging
To whin-bush and brake,
The skylark is singing
"Merrie hunters, awake!"
Home to the cover,
Deserted by night,
The little Red Rover
Is bending his flight.

II

Resounds the glad hollo;
The pack scents the prey;
Man and horse follow
Away! Hark, away!
Away! never fearing,
Ne'er slacken your pace:
What music so cheering
As that of the chase?

III

The Rover still speeding,
Still distant from home,
Spurr'd flanks are bleeding,
And cover'd with foam;
Fleet limbs extended,
Roan, chestnut, or grey,
The burst, ere 'tis ended,
Shall try them to-day!

IV

Well known is yon cover,
And crag hanging o'er,
The little Red Rover
Shall reach it no more!
The foremost hounds near him,
His strength 'gins to droop:
In pieces they tear him,
Who-whoop! Who-who-whoop!

R. E. Egerton Warburton.

The Fox

I

The birds see him first, jay and blackbird and thrush,
They shriek at his coming, and curse him each one;
With the clay of the vale on his pads and his brush,
It's the Fallowfield fox, and he's pretty near done:
It's a couple of hours since a Whip tally-ho'd him;
Now the rookery's stooping to mob and to goad him;
There's an earth on the hill, but he's cooked past believing,
And his tongue's hanging out and his wet ribs are heaving.

II

Here he comes up the field at a woebegone trot;
He's as stiff as a poker, he's done all he knows;
Now the ploughmen'll view him as likely as not;
There—they run to the paling and yell as he goes:
Here's an end, if we live to be two minutes older;
See, he turns a glazed eye o'er a mud-spattered shoulder;
There's a hound through the hedgerow. . . .
Game's up, and he's beaten,
And he faces about with a snarl to be eaten.

Patrick R. Chalmers.

The Lost Hound

The winter sunset lit the leafless trees
With gold and crimson as the short day waned;
The wind had ceased its plaintive melodies;
The woodland darkened, and deep silence reigned.

Then sudden from the firs there rose a wail,
A cry that shook the heavens with distress;
A lost hound stood, one foot upon the rail,
Telling the crescent moon his loneliness.

Hunting some cold scent with no comrade near,
From all the laughing world his feet had strayed,
Until the shadows wrapped him, and his fear
Pursued him like an ogre through the glade.

But now with gold stars gathering in the blue,
And landmarks slowly fading from his sight,
With broad fields round him and no field he knew,
He cried his childish doubtings to the night.

Then far away he heard a questing horn;
The Whip returning for his one lost hound.
He slipped between the rails with hope new-born
And loped across the stubble to the sound.

“Reveller! Reveller!—Come along, boy!”
The big hound heard the comfort of his name.
The glint of scarlet filled his cup of joy;
Out of the shadows like a wraith he came.

Will H. Ogilvie.



THE DEATH

From the painting by H. Alken, sen. (1785-1851)



The Ballad of the Foxhunter

"Now lay me in a cushioned chair
And carry me, you four,
With cushions here and cushions there,
To see the world once more.

And some one from the stables bring
My Dermot dear and brown,
And lead him gently in a ring,
And gently up and down.

Now leave the chair upon the grass
Bring hound and huntsman here,
And I on this strange road will pass,
Filled full of ancient cheer."

His eyelids droop, his head falls low,
His old eyes cloud with dreams;
The sun upon all things that grow
Pours round in sleepy streams.

Brown Dermot treads upon the lawn,
And to the arm-chair goes,
And now the old man's dreams are gone,
He smooths the long brown nose.

And now moves many a pleasant tongue
Upon his wasted hands,
For leading agèd hounds and young
The huntsman near him stands.

"My huntsman Rody, blow the horn
And make the hills reply."
The huntsman loosens on the morn
A gay and wandering cry.

A fire is in the old man's eyes
His fingers move and sway,
And when the wandering music dies,
They hear him feebly say—

“My huntsman Rody, blow the horn,
And make the hills reply.”
“I cannot blow upon my horn,
I can but weep and sigh.”

The servants round his cushioned place
Are with new sorrow wrung;
And hounds are gazing on his face,
Both aged hounds and young.

One blind hound only lies apart
On the sun-smitten grass;
He holds deep commune in his heart:
The moments pass and pass.

The blind hound with a mournful din
Lifts slow his wintry head;
The servants bear the body in—
The hounds wail for the dead.

W. B. Yeats.

Hounds Going Home in the Dark

Rustle of feet in the roadside grass,
Trample of horses' hoofs, and—Hark!
Blast of an anxious horn! Hounds pass;
Hounds going home in the dark.

Bold was our huntsman galloping free
On a difficult line to the hills to-day,
But his hand is trembling against his knee
At the hint of a light on the King's Highway.

“Car!” and the gold spreads over the sky;
“Keep to the front there! Stop them, Mark!”
Toot-toot-too-oot!—Halloo, there!—Hi!”—
Hounds going home in the dark.

Crack of a whip as the headlights near—
Blind in the blaze they group and grope.
“Curse the feller, and can't he hear?
Put 'em across, there!—Cope, boys, cope!”

When never a star is hung in the sky,
With never a lamp or a lantern spark
Huntsman and Whips go groping by,
Blowing them home in the dark.

Will H. Ogilvie.

Together (1917)

Splashing along the boggy woods all day
And over brambled hedge and holding clay,
 I shall not think of him:
But when the watery fields grow brown and dim,
 And hounds have lost their fox, and horses tire,
I know that he'll be with me on my way
 Home through the darkness to the evening fire.

He's jumped each stile along the glistening lanes;
His hand will be upon the mud-soaked reins;
 Hearing the saddle creak,
He'll wonder if the frost will come next week.
 I shall forget him in the morning light;
And while we gallop on he will not speak:
 But at the stable-door he'll say good-night.

Siegfried Sassoon.

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